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ABSTRACT

This report describes the procedures used to collect, describe, and evaluate school-based writing in a special pilot portfolio study conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to explore portfolios as an alternative method of assessing students' writing achievement. The report has three main purposes: (1) to explore procedures for collecting classroom-based writing from students around the country; (2) to develop methods for describing and classifying the variety of writing submitted; and (3) to create general scoring guides that could be applied across papers written in response to a variety of prompts or activities. The report is divided into four chapters. Following an introduction, the first chapter describes the writing received from the students and information from participating teachers about the activities that generated the writing. Chapter 2 explains the procedures used to evaluate the writing students submitted as well as the results of this evaluation. Chapter 3 compares the results of the NAEP 1990 writing assessment with the analysis of participants' school-based writing samples and summarizes the lessons learned from the portfolio study. Chapter 4 contains a set of sample papers, further illustrating how the evaluative guides can be applied and presenting a sense of the range and depth of writing received from participating students. Appendixes contain information on demographic characteristics and on students' performance by process strategies. (SR)

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing

NAEP's 1990 Portfolio Study

THE NATION'S REPORT CARD naep

Prepared by Educational Testing Service for the National Assessment of Educational Progress 1990 Writing Assessment under contract with the National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement U.S. Department of Education

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Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing

NAEP's 1990 Portfolio Study

CLAUDIA GENTILE

APRIL 1992

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I

Introduction

Purpose

In recent years, teachers nationwide have been using process approaches to writing instruction to help students become effective communicators. Many students write major texts over extended periods of time, and in many classrooms, writing instruction encompasses a range of interrelated activities that engage students in pre-writing activities, drafting, and revision.[1] As a part of this process, student writers often consult with peers, teachers, and parents.[2] The aim of these methods is to enable students to produce richer, more developed pieces of writing.

However, we face a problem when we try to assess the extent to which these efforts are successful. Traditional methods of evaluating students' writing (in particular, the timed essay test) are designed to measure a specific facet of writing ability — how well students can write on an assigned topic under timed conditions.[3] They are not designed to capture the range and depth of the writing processes in which students engage during process writing instruction programs.[4]

It is possible to emulate aspects of the process approach to writing within the context of traditional writing assessment methods. For example, the time allocated for writing can be increased, and can even be held over several days to allow for peer review and other classroom activities (e.g., New Brunswick, Canada Reading and Language Arts Multi-day Assessment Program).[5] However, holding an assessment over several days poses operational difficulties, increasing the costs and complexity of assessments.

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[1] Janet Emig, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*. (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. NCTE Research Report No. 13, ERIC Document No. ED 058205, 1971).

[2] Nancy Atwell, "Making the grade," in *Understanding Writing: Ways of Observing, Learning, and Teaching* (2nd edition), Thomas Newkirk and Nancy Atwell, editors. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988).

[3] Hunter M. Breland, Roberta Camp, Robert J. Jones, Margaret M. Morris, and Donald A. Rock, *Assessing Writing Skill*. (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1987).

[4] C. K. Lucas. "Toward ecological evaluation, Part 1," *The Quarterly, 10* (1), 1-3, 12-17, 1988.

[5] New Brunswick Reading and Language Arts Assessment Program. (Ministry of Education, New Brunswick, Canada, 1991).

Another way of establishing stronger connections between process writing curriculums and assessment methods is to adapt an instructional tool — writing portfolios — for assessment purposes.[6] Recently, schools, districts, and states have been exploring ways of using classroom writing portfolios to assess students' writing achievements. Using the writing students have produced as they engage in process writing programs establishes an immediate connection between the assessment and the writing process curriculum.[7] Recent efforts to adapt writing portfolios for assessment purposes can be classified into three types: the classroom portfolio, the combination portfolio, and the assessment portfolio.

The Classroom Portfolio While Classroom Portfolios differ from classroom to classroom, they usually share several key characteristics. During the school year, as part of their English/language arts classwork, students collect their written work in folders. At specific points in the term, they review their work and create a portfolio by engaging in a process of reflection, selection, and description. (e.g., New York City Portfolio Project, ARTS Propel).[8]

The reflection and selection stages are guided by a set of criteria developed by teachers and/or students, based on the writing curriculum they are following.[9] These criteria often focus on the depth of student writing (writing that demonstrates the use of process strategies and writing that shows growth over time) and on the breadth of student writing (writing that illustrates the range of activities in which students have engaged).

Often the students determine how many pieces to include in their portfolios, with a minimum of three being common practice. A central element of these portfolios is the letters or statements students write explaining their selections and how their choices meet the selection criteria. This process of reviewing and evaluating one's own writing and then articulating one's decisions is considered central to the portfolio experience because it fosters students' development as writers.[10] The classroom teachers assist students throughout this process and also evaluate the portfolios. Sometimes other

[6] S. Murphy and M. A. Smith, "Talking about portfolios," *The Quarterly, 12* (2), 1990.

[7] D. Galleher, "Assessment in context: Toward a national writing project model," *The Quarterly, 9*, (3), 5-7, 1987.

Robert J. Tierney, Mark A. Carter, and Laura E. Desai, *Portfolio Assessment in the Reading-Writing Classroom*, (Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc., 1991).

[8] Roberta Camp, "Thinking together about portfolios," *The Quarterly, 12*, (2), 8-14, 27, 1990.

Mary Fowles and Claudia Gentile, *Evaluation Report of CUNY Lehman's Writing Across the Curriculum Program*, (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1989).

[9] Denny P. Wolf, "Opening up assessment," *Educational Leadership, 45*, (4), 24-29, December, 1987/January, 1988.

[10] E. Winner and E. Rosenblatt, "Tracking the effects of the portfolio process: What changes and when?" *Portfolio, 1* (5), 21-26, 1989.

students, friends, and family read and comment on students' portfolios.[11] Students may collect portfolios for part of the year, the whole year, or over their whole academic careers, for one class or all classes.

The Combination Portfolio The second type of portfolio assessment system uses a combination of approaches to collect writing from students (e.g., Vermont Portfolio Project).[12] In addition to asking students to assemble a portfolio from the work they have collected for their classes, students are asked to select a "best piece" and to include in their letter describing their portfolio an explanation of what makes this their best effort. Students may also be asked to complete a writing activity common to all students in a particular class or group. These three components — portfolio, best piece, and common piece — are then evaluated individually by one or more teachers and evaluative information is presented on each component, resulting in a profile of an individual student's writing achievements. Summary statements to students about their entire portfolios are also made by their classroom teacher, other teachers, and/or other students.

The Assessment Portfolio The third type of portfolio assessment system involves administering several common writing activities to students (e.g., Rhode Island Portfolio Project).[13] Committees of teachers design a series of multi-day writing activities that reflect their writing curriculum. On the same days, using the same administration procedures, the teachers have their students engage in these activities. They collect the students' work in folders and have the students review their work and write letters explaining which activity yielded the best writing and from which they learned the most. A committee of teachers then meets to score the students' responses to each activity. The result is a profile of each student's achievements relative to the common tasks. This type of portfolio differs from traditional essay assessments in that the activities are designed to match a specific school's or state's curriculum and the students' work is accomplished as part of their regular classroom activities rather than under standardized assessment conditions.

The 1990 NAEP Pilot Portfolio Study In keeping with these new developments, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has begun exploring alternative methods of assessing students' writing achievements — methods that focus on the writing students regularly produce as part of their classroom activities. NAEP conducted a pilot portfolio study in

[11] J. Flood and D. Lapp. "Reporting reading progress: A comparison portfolio for parents," *The Reading Teacher, 42*, (7), 508-514. 1989.

[12] R. P. Mills, "Portfolios capture rich array of student performance," *The School Administrator*, 8-11. 1989.

[13] Mary Fowles and Claudia Gentile. *Validity Study of the 1988 Rhode Island Third-Grade Writing Assessment*. (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1989).

1990 in order to explore the feasibility of conducting large-scale assessments using school-based writing. The main purposes of this pilot study were: (1) to explore procedures for collecting classroom-based writing from students around the country; (2) to develop methods for describing and classifying the variety of writing submitted; and (3) to create general scoring guides that could be applied across papers written in response to a variety of prompts or activities.

To this end, a nationally representative subgroup of the fourth and eighth graders who participated in NAEP's 1990 writing trend assessment was asked to work with their teachers and submit one piece of writing that they considered to be a sample of their best writing efforts. The goal was to create a "Nation's Portfolio" — a compilation of the best writing produced by fourth and eighth graders in classrooms across the country.

NAEP analyzed and summarized these samples of writing along with teachers' descriptions of the assignments that produced them. In addition, NAEP compared students' school-based writings to their responses on the 1990 NAEP writing assessment to examine relationships between these two modes of assessment. This report describes the procedures used to collect, describe, and evaluate the school-based writing in this special pilot study.

The 1990 writing assessment was a trend assessment — prompts that had been developed for the 1984 assessment, and readministered in 1988, were also given in 1990 in order to measure changes in students' writing achievements across the six-year period. In 1992, NAEP will continue the writing trend assessment, as well as conduct a new writing assessment comprised of informative, narrative, and persuasive writing prompts developed specifically for the 1992 assessment. While the trend writing assessment has not changed since 1984, the new 1992 writing assessment reflects recent developments in the field of writing instruction and assessment. For example, the time allocated for writing has been expanded to 25- and 50-minute periods. Also, a planning page has been included after each prompt, to encourage students to reflect and plan their responses to the topics. The 1992 assessment will also include a revised and expanded version of the 1990 pilot portfolio study and participants will be selected from among those students taking the new regular writing assessment.

Collecting Students' Writing

The Participants Approximately 4,000 students who participated in the 1990 NAEP writing assessment — 2,000 students at grade 4 and another 2,000 students at grade 8 — were invited to participate in the special portfolio study. Based on traditional NAEP sampling procedures, this group would have been a nationally representative sample of the nation's fourth and eighth graders.

However, only 55 percent (1,110 students) of the fourth graders and 54 percent (1,101 students) of the eighth graders and/or their teachers accepted this invitation. While these response rates provided enough papers to permit an analysis of the writing submitted on a pilot basis, as statistical samples they were too small to make generalizations about all of the nation's fourth and eighth graders' writing performances.

While the participants did not represent a national sample of students, they were from all of the major geographic regions and from various types of communities, including rural, suburban, and inner city. They represented a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds as well as a balance between males and females (see Appendix A for details on the demographic characteristics of the participants).

Compared with the entire group of students who participated in the 1990 NAEP writing assessment, the participants of this study differed in some respects. Slightly higher percentages of the portfolio pilot study participants:

- were above the modal ages of the sample (ages 9 and 13),
- attended schools in advantaged urban communities, reported having higher grades,
- reported having a greater number of reading materials at home, and
- received slightly higher scores on the NAEP writing assessment tasks.

When considering the data from this pilot study, it is important to keep in mind that the students who participated appear to be somewhat older, higher achieving, and more advantaged than the larger population of students assessed by NAEP in 1990.

The Procedures In the spring of 1990, at the time of the NAEP writing assessment, the English/language arts teachers of participating students were asked to help several of their students choose a sample of their own *best* writing from the work the students had completed so far in the 1989-90 school year. No more than 10 students from any given class were selected to participate. Teachers were asked to encourage their students to choose pieces that had involved the use of writing process strategies (such as revising successive drafts, using reference sources, consulting with others about writing). NAEP also asked teachers to attach a description of the activities that generated the students' writing and to comment on any process strategies the students used to produce their writing.

Teachers then submitted their students' writing to NAEP, along with a copy or description of the activities that generated the writing and any available drafts or prewriting samples. These pieces were used to create two national portfolios or collections of students' classroom writing — one containing the writings of fourth graders and the other containing the writings of eighth graders.

Unfortunately, due to the complex procedures NAEP employs to select students to participate in its assessments, we were unable to inform teachers at an early date which of their students would be participating in this study, with some teachers receiving only several days' notice. Thus, for the pilot, teachers and students did not have much time to review the students' writing and select best pieces. Based on this experience, a procedure for giving teachers more advance notice of the upcoming portfolio assessment was developed for the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study. It is hoped that, by giving the participating teachers in 1992 several months' notice, the 1992 results will be representative.

Outline of this Report

This report is divided into four sections. Chapter One describes the writing received from the students and information from participating teachers about the activities that generated the writing. Chapter Two explains the procedures used to evaluate the writing students submitted as well as the results of this evaluation. Chapter Three compares the results of the NAEP 1990 writing assessment with the analysis of participants' school-based writing samples and summarizes the lessons learned from this portfolio study. The last chapter contains a set of sample papers, further illustrating how the evaluative guides can be applied and presenting a sense of the range and depth of writing we received from participating students.

1

Describing the Writing

The first step in determining the feasibility of analyzing the students' classroom-based writing was to see whether NAEP could describe and classify the wide diversity of writing submitted by the participants. Considering that no more than eight students from any single class were selected to participate in this study, most of the papers submitted represented responses to unique classroom activities. The corpus of writing submitted might be so diverse that every paper would need to be evaluated with a unique set of criteria, which would make comparing students' classroom-based writing impossible. The challenge, then, was to develop descriptive criteria that would yield useful information about the types of writing students submitted. Once this was accomplished, the next step, moving beyond describing papers to evaluating performance, could be addressed.

Describing the classroom-based writing collected from students across the nation yields a profile of the types of writing activities actually occurring in our nation's classrooms. Classroom-based writing samples provide us with first-hand information about the writing activities in which students are engaging, rather than the second-hand information gained from teacher and student surveys. This information provides a rich context in which to place the results of NAEP's timed writing assessment. For example, although persuasive writing is featured prominently in the frameworks which underlie the NAEP writing assessments, the small number of persuasive papers submitted by students in this pilot study indicates that persuasive writing was not frequently part of their classroom activities.

To accomplish the task of describing the writing submitted, a panel of writing experts was assembled. Each member had experience developing writing portfolio programs at the school, district, or state level. After reading a large sample of the students' papers, the panel developed a series of descriptive categories to capture the key features of the students' papers. These categories focused on: (1) the types of writing submitted; (2) the audience addressed; and (3) the evidence of resources used. Also noted were: (4) evidence of process and revision strategies used; (5) evidence of computer use; and (6) length of text. A group of trained essay readers then read all of the papers submitted and applied these descriptive categories to the papers. The results of this analysis are presented below.

Types of Writing

As shown in Table 1.1, at both grades 4 and 8 the majority of writing submitted was classified as informative. A large percentage of the papers submitted were narratives and very few were persuasive pieces, poems, letters, or research reports. One percent of the eighth-grade papers were persuasive letters. These were classified as persuasives in order to increase the sample of persuasive pieces available for analysis.

Table 1.1: Types of Writing*

Type of Writing	Grade 4	Grade 8
	%	%
Informative	51	59
Narrative	36	30
Persuasive	1	5
Poems	2	1
Letters	3	1
Research Reports	0	1
Skill Sheets	7	5

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

It is interesting to note that several teachers in both grades commented that they did not begin teaching writing until later in the school year. As a result, they did not have samples of extended pieces of student writing to submit. Instead, these teachers sent in copies of work sheets, short answer quizzes, or spelling lists, which were classified as skill sheets.

At an early stage in classifying students' papers, a distinction was made between personal experience narratives and fictional narratives, and between informative reports and analytic reports.[14] We believed that these differentiations would accommodate and acknowledge the variety within both the narrative and report classifications. However, during the process of developing the scoring guides, the distinctions between the two types of narratives and the two types of reports were found to be negligible — the same scoring guide

[14] These categories were based on those used by the California Assessment Program, 1989.

could be used for both types of narratives and the same scoring guide for both types of reports. NAEP classified the papers in these domains, therefore, as either narrative or informative.

Audience

Often writers' perceptions of their audience and their abilities to clearly address audiences are a central factor in effective writing.[15] In addition, writing experts have emphasized that having students write for a variety of audiences enhances their writing abilities.[16] Although NAEP did not query students specifically about the intended audiences of their papers, their submissions were analyzed for evidence of intended audience.

Almost all of the fourth- and eighth-grade papers (93 percent and 96 percent, respectively) appeared to be written to an unspecified audience. Nothing in these papers referred to a particular audience. Less than 1 percent of the papers at each grade level were written specifically to the teacher. Also, approximately 1 percent at each grade were written to an authority figure or parent. Less than 3 percent at either grade level were written to a friend or to oneself.

Evidence of the Use of Process Strategies

When analyzing the students' papers, the readers also looked for evidence of the use of writing process strategies, such as revisions of drafts, prewriting activities, and peer or teacher collaboration. To locate this evidence, the readers considered the pieces submitted by the students, as well as information provided by the teachers about the writing activities.

As Table 1.2 indicates, less than 50 percent of the papers submitted showed evidence of the use of writing process strategies. Of those papers containing evidence of revision, only 1 percent at each grade level involved revisions beyond changes to the surface features of the papers (i.e., spelling, punctuation, capitalization). Twenty-one percent at grade 4 and 31 percent at grade 8 showed evidence of minor revisions. Sixteen percent at grade 4 and 11 percent at grade 8 showed evidence of having used other process strategies, such as prewriting (brainstorming, reading, discussing topics with family or friends) and teacher or peer conferencing.

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[15] William F. Brewer, "Literary Theory, Rhetoric, and Stylistics: Implications for Psychology," in *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, Rand J. Spiro, Bertram C. Bruce, and William F. Brewer, editors (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980).

[16] George Hillocks, Jr., *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* (Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, 1986).

Table 1.2: Writing Process Strategies

	Grade 4	Grade 8
	%	%
Evidence of major revisions	1	1
Evidence of minor revisions	21	31
Evidence of other process strategies*	16	11
Evidence of writing process, total	38	43

*Other process strategies include peer or teacher conferencing and prewriting activities.

It should be noted that several teachers indicated they sent us "clean" copies of their students' writing. Although we had asked for drafts and evidence of students' use of process strategies, the teachers stated that they assumed we wanted final, "error-free" versions of students' work with no teacher comments on them. To help avoid this confusion in 1992, the directions to teachers and students emphasize that any prewriting or drafts available for each piece should be included in the portfolios submitted in 1992.

Evidence of the Use of Resources for Writing

Another central aspect of recent developments in writing instruction has been an emphasis on integrating writing and reading and on the role writing can play in promoting learning across the disciplines.[17] While the focus of this study was on the writing students did for their English or language arts classes, the readers also looked for evidence that students had used outside resources when writing their papers as a further clue to the kinds of writing in which students engaged.

Table 1.3 shows that the resources used for the majority of papers were the students' own ideas and observations. This was more true for the eighth graders than for the fourth graders. Note that the categories overlap — a paper may have contained a reference to something read as well as to something studied in school. Therefore, if totalled, the percentages may exceed 100 percent.

[17] J. Moffett and B. J. Wagner, *Student-centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers*, 3rd edition, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1983).

A. Young and T. Fulwiler (Editors). *Writing Across the Disciplines: Research into Practice*, (Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1986).

Table 1.3: Evidence of Resources for Writing

	Grade 4	Grade 8
	%	%
Student's own ideas, observations	76	87
Something read	12	14
Something studied in school	13	6

Length of Papers and Use of Computers

One benefit to using students' classroom-based writing is that, under regular classroom situations, students have time to write longer texts than they do under timed assessment situations. The length of the classroom-based papers submitted by the fourth graders in this study ranged from eight words to 1,250 words, with a median length of 84 words. The papers submitted by eighth graders ranged from five words to 4,400, with a median length of 140 words.

Although many schools across the country have computers available to students, it is interesting to note that a very small percentage of papers submitted for the study were presented on computer printouts: 2 percent at the fourth grade and 6 percent at the eighth grade.

Types of Activities

Recent theories in literacy education emphasize the benefit of creating rich, realistic learning contexts in which students are active participants in the development of their reading and writing abilities.[18] Process approaches to writing instruction also emphasize the active, meaning-creating aspects of writing.[19] Under these approaches teachers alternate between activities that require students to select their own topics, purposes, and audiences for writing and activities in which the teacher (or other students) specify a topic. The goal is to give students a wide range of experience with writing. In school and beyond school, students will be asked to write for their own as well as for other people's purposes. Therefore, a central goal of writing programs is to enable students to be effective writers under both self-directed and authority-directed conditions.

[18] Angela Jaggar and M. Trika Smith-Burke, *Observing the Language Learner*, (Newark DE: International Reading Association and Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1985).

[19] Judith A. Langer and Arthur N. Applebee, *How Writing Shapes Thinking: A Study of Teaching and Learning*, (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1987).

Fifty percent of the teachers who participated in this study included a brief description of the activities that generated their students' writing. Less than 1 percent of the activity descriptions submitted by teachers at either grade indicated that students had been asked to select their own topics.

The remaining activity descriptions were analyzed and then classified according to how specific the activities were and what sources of knowledge students were required to draw upon to complete the activities. This analysis yielded four main types of activities: general prompts, focused prompts, content reports, and integrated activities. "Prompts" are any topic, situation, stimulus, or assignment given to students to elicit a sample of writing. In keeping with recent theories about the importance of context in literacy learning, writing instruction and assessment experts maintain that an effective writing prompt (or instructional activity) should not only specify a topic for the writer, but a clear audience and purpose as well.[20]

Table 1.4 summarizes the percentage of activities in each category. None of the persuasive papers had activity descriptions from the teachers, so only the two major domains, narrative and informative, are presented below.

Table 1.4: Types of Activities*

	Informative		Narrative		Total	
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 4	Grade 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%
General Prompts	47	48	89	82	68	60
Focused Prompts	17	22	6	12	12	18
Content Reports	28	22	1	5	15	16
Integrated Activities	8	8	4	2	6	6

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

General Writing Prompts Sixty-eight percent of the fourth-grade and 60 percent of the eighth-grade activities could be classified as *General Writing Prompts*. In these types of activities the teachers gave the students a general

[20] Edward M. White, *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass Publishers, 1986).

topic about which to write, but did not focus their attention on any single aspect of the topic. Nor do these prompts make explicit to students an audience or purpose for their writing. The overwhelming majority of narrative papers fit into this category, as did almost half of the informative papers. Below are two examples of this type of activity.

Write about Thanksgiving. Choose one of the following topics: what Thanksgiving means to me or what I am thankful for.
(eighth grade)

Look at the copy of the photograph I gave you (a bicycle lying on its side on a country road). Write a story that refers in some way to this bicycle.
(eighth grade)

Focused Writing Prompts Overall, 12 percent of the fourth-grade and 18 percent of the eighth-grade activities described by the teachers could be classified as *Focused Writing Prompts*. With these activities, teachers specified for students not only the topic and the task but an overall purpose. Sometimes activities in this category also specified an audience and criteria for effective writing. Only 6 percent of the fourth-grade and 12 percent of the eighth-grade narrative papers were written in response to focused prompts; 17 percent of the fourth-grade and 22 percent of the eighth-grade activities that generated informative pieces specified audience and purpose. Below are two examples of this type of activity.

Writing Situation: Your day is going badly. You were late to first period, you forgot your math homework, you left your lunch on the bus, your pen ran out of ink, and your locker combination didn't work! To top it all off, you suddenly realize that since yesterday you have shrunk two inches.

Directions for Writing: Write a story about what happens to you next. Let your reader know how you feel, what you think and see, how people treat you, and what happens after you discover you are actually shrinking. Write a readable story that will entertain and surprise your readers.
(eighth grade)

Students were asked to write an informative paragraph giving advice to a younger sister or brother about how to get along in school or how to get along with the teacher.
(eighth grade)

Content Reports Although we had asked for papers students had written for their English or language arts classes, some students submitted papers on science or social studies topics, indicating the use of writing acros: the curriculum.

Overall, 15 percent of the fourth-grade and 16 percent of the eighth-grade activities fit into the third category: *Content Reports*. These activities required that students write papers reporting on information they learned from classwork and/or readings. Papers about historical figures or concepts in science are examples of this type of activity. Also in this group are book reviews and reactions to fictional stories.

Only 1 percent of the fourth-grade and 5 percent of the eighth-grade narrative activities fit into this category. Twenty-eight percent of the fourth-grade and 22 percent of the eighth-grade informatives were *Content Reports*. Below are two examples.

After all of the students read a story that dealt with emotional change, the students were told to write their own story involving an emotional change. They were to use the one they had read in class as a model.
(eighth grade)

Based on our lesson about Paul Revere, write a dialog between Paul Revere and a newspaper interviewer. The interviewer should ask Paul Revere for details about his role in the American Revolution.
(eighth grade)

Integrated Activities Very few of the activities, 6 percent at both grades 4 and 8, appeared to be part of multi-day, multi-stage, integrated activities, where teachers engaged students in a series of classroom activities around a central theme or text. Below is an example of this type of activity.

1. Story starters were distributed to students (such as: "Tom Turkey was a big turkey. Now I don't mean an ordinary big turkey. No sir! I mean an extraordinary, gigantic turkey. In fact, Tom Turkey was so big that. . .").
2. The class brainstormed together. They shared ideas about the different story starters, jotting down notes for their own papers.
3. Students selected one of the story starters and wrote first drafts of a story.
4. The next day, they divided into groups of three to share their first drafts. Group members offered ideas to revise/improve each others' stories. They also helped with sentence structure and other grammatical problems.
5. The third day, proofreading guidelines were discussed and students worked in pairs to proofread each others' stories.
6. Students prepared a final draft of their stories and shared them as part of the Thanksgiving celebration.
(fourth grade)

Summary

Although participants in this study came from different classrooms in different schools across the country, and they wrote on a wide variety of topics, the papers they submitted had some commonalities. Most of the papers we received were either informative or narrative pieces, written for an unspecified audience, in response to general writing prompts or content report activities from their teachers. Less than half of the papers showed evidence that their writers had employed process strategies in producing them, and most were based on the students' own ideas and observations. In addition, the papers at both grade levels varied widely in length, while few were written on computer.

One of the major lessons we learned from our initial examination of the students' classroom-based writing was the need to collect more systematic information about the types of activities in which students had engaged. As part of the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study design, a brief teacher questionnaire, asking for more specific information about the activities that generate the writing students select for their portfolios, is included. Also, students are asked to write a letter explaining why they included the pieces they selected. Likewise, the need to include evidence or information about the use of process strategies is emphasized in the directions to both students and teachers.

2

Evaluating the Writing

Developing Evaluative Guides

In order to broaden the information gained about students' classroom-based writing performance as well as the context for writing, NAEP wanted to explore the feasibility of evaluating writing obtained from a variety of prompts or activities. For its regular writing assessments, NAEP typically develops specific scoring guides for each of its writing prompts. The limitations of this approach for evaluating diverse samples of school-based writing are obvious. With more than 250 classrooms involved in this study, developing a scoring guide for each unique assignment would be impossible. Therefore, NAEP explored the idea of developing scoring guides specific to each of the major domains identified through our descriptive analysis: narrative, informative, and persuasive. To accomplish the task of developing domain-specific scoring guides, NAEP assembled a team of elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and teacher educators.

Using samples of the writing, NAEP staff worked with the team of teachers to develop scoring guides for the two most commonly submitted domains: informative and narrative. Because NAEP also assesses students' persuasive writing in the regular assessment, we developed a scoring guide for the persuasive papers, even though very few persuasive papers were submitted. The process the team of teachers used to develop the guides involved three major stages: reading and sorting; classifying and consensus; and describing and confirming.

Reading and Sorting Beginning with the informative pieces, the team first read approximately 60 randomly selected papers from each grade level, which comprised about 10 percent of all the informative papers. Based on a general, holistic impression, team members sorted the papers into four to six groups ranging from highest to lowest.

This stage involved confirming that all of the papers first classified as informative were genuinely informative. The team defined informative as those papers that had, implicitly or explicitly, the purpose of conveying information or ideas. Thank you letters and opinion statements are examples of some of the papers that were reclassified because their purposes were not primarily informative. Research papers that used more than five reference

sources, although informative in purpose, were so much longer than most of the other informative papers that they were placed in a separate category.

Also, papers in which the teacher provided students with the first sentence to each paragraph seemed more like elaborated fill-in-the-blank worksheets than original papers. These were reclassified as skill sheets.

Classifying and Consensus Next, the readers compared the way they each had sorted the papers, discussing which papers represented high, medium, and low levels of performance. In the process, they discussed a range of criteria that could be used to evaluate writing in general and informative writing in particular. Their goal was to identify levels of development in informative writing.

To this end, the team decided to focus on the cognitive elements of the papers. When rereading the papers, they asked themselves, "How much information is the student conveying in the paper?" "What kinds of relationships do the writers establish between the ideas and information?" "How developed are the ideas and information?"

As the discussion progressed, the team members articulated the criteria they each used to place papers into categories. This discussion continued until a common set of criteria could be agreed upon and specified.

Describing and Confirming Using the common set of criteria, the team then described a range of performance for informative writing. Papers that exemplified each level of performance were selected. The team then applied the criteria to a new set of papers from each grade level (another 10 percent of the informative papers), refining their descriptions.

At first, the fourth- and eighth-grade papers were read separately, the plan being to develop different guides for each grade level. However, after the informative guide had been developed for the fourth-grade papers, and the group moved on to consider the eighth-grade informative pieces, they found that the same criteria could be applied to both grades.

The procedures outlined above also were used to develop scoring guides for the narrative and persuasive pieces. Narrative papers were defined as pieces that described a sequence of events, real or imagined. Persuasive papers were those letters, paragraphs, or essays that stated a position or opinion primarily for the purpose of persuading or convincing. The idea of developing one generic scoring guide for all papers was discussed. However, the scoring guide development team concluded that the purposes and methods of development for the three domains were so different that they required separate sets of criteria for evaluation.

Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 present the three scoring guides developed. Each guide classifies papers into six main levels. Later in the chapter, samples of students' papers are presented for each of the levels within these guides.

The Narrative Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the narrative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of narrative writing. First, they loosely defined a story as a series of related events or happenings. Hence, the first level of the narrative scoring guide is not termed a "story," but an *Event Description* because only one event is described.

Figure 2.1: Narrative Scoring Guide

1 **Event Description.** Paper is a list of sentences minimally related or a list of sentences that all describe a single event.

2 **Undeveloped Story.** Paper is a listing of related events. More than one event is described, but with few details about setting, characters, or the events. (Usually there is no more than one sentence telling about each event.)

3 **Basic Story.** Paper describes a series of events, giving details (in at least two or three sentences) about some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or problems to be solved). But the story lacks cohesion because of problems with syntax, sequencing, events missing, or an undeveloped ending.

4 **Extended Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes, including details about most story elements (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, problems to be solved). But the stories are confusing or incomplete (i.e., at the end the characters' goals are ignored or problems inadequately resolved; the beginning does not match the rest of the story; the internal logic or plausibility of characters' actions is not maintained).

5 **Developed Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are clearly developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved) with a simple resolution of these goals or problems at the end. May have one or two problems or include too much detail.

6 **Elaborated Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are well developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved). The resolution of the goals or problems at the end are elaborated. The events are presented and elaborated in a cohesive way.

The second feature the team saw as differentiating among the narrative papers was amount of development. The main difference between the second and third levels of the narrative guide is that, in a *Basic Story*, one aspect of the story is somewhat developed, whereas no aspects of an *Undeveloped Story* are presented in any detail. The difference between the third and fourth levels is that many of the events of an *Extended Story* are somewhat developed at the fourth level. At the fifth level (*Developed Story*) almost all of the events are described in detail.

The third feature of narrative writing the team used to evaluate the papers was quality of development. Papers classified at the upper two levels, *Developed Story* and *Elaborated Story*, not only contained detailed episodes, but also included some source of tension or conflict (characters' goals, problems to be solved, mysteries to be unravelled). These two levels differ in the author's success in establishing and resolving the tension or conflict. While in *Developed Stories* tension is clearly (and often creatively) established, it is not completely resolved; in *Elaborated Stories* the tension is both clearly established and completely resolved.

The Informative Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the informative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key traits of informative writing. First, they loosely defined informative writing as the presentation of information and ideas for the purpose of informing an audience. Further, in the process of presenting information, the writer establishes relationships between pieces of information and/or ideas. The papers were then classified according to how well the writers had succeeded in establishing relationships and according to how well they presented the information to a particular audience for a specific purpose.

The differences between levels one through four are the degree to which the writers established relationships between the pieces of information in their papers. The difference between levels five and six is the degree to which the writers conveyed a sense of audience and purpose. This was often accomplished through the use of an overt type of organizational structure.

Figure 2.2: Informative Scoring Guide

1 **Listing.** Paper lists pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic, but does not relate them. A range of information/ideas is presented.

2 **Attempted Discussion.** Paper includes several pieces of information and some range of information. In part of the paper, an attempt is made to relate some of the information (in a sentence or two), but relationships are not clearly established because ideas are incomplete or undeveloped (the amount of explanation and details is limited).

3 **Undeveloped Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and attempts to relate some of the pieces of information. The relationships are somewhat established, but not completely. The ideas are confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

4 **Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and, in at least one section, clearly relates the information using rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, suppositions, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking, exemplification).

5 **Partially Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are well developed, with explanations and supporting details. Paragraphs are well formed but the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose and cohesion.

6 **Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information and relationships are explained and supported. The paper has a coherent sense of purpose and audience, and is free from grammatical problems. An overt organizational structure is used (such as the traditional essay format).

The Persuasive Scoring Guide In reading and evaluating the persuasive papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of persuasive discourse: stating an opinion or position, supporting one's opinion with reasons and/or explanation, and attempting to diffuse or refute the opposing position. While developing an argument by clearly stating and supporting an opinion may be considered an effective way of persuading an audience, the team felt that papers which include the recognition and

refutation of an opposing viewpoint to be more complex forms of persuasion. They placed the 58 persuasive papers submitted by students along a continuum of persuasive complexity, ranging from opinion to argumentation to refutation.

Figure 2.3: Persuasive Scoring Guide

1 **Opinion.** Paper is a statement of opinion, but no reasons are given to support the opinion, or the reasons given are inconsistent or unrelated to the opinion.

2 **Extended Opinion.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, but the reasons are not explained or the explanations given are incoherent.

3 **Partially Developed Argument.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, plus attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations are given but not developed or elaborated. May contain a brief reference to the opposite point of view.

4 **Developed Argument.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support the opinion, plus explanations, with at least one explanation developed through the use of rhetorical devices (such as sequence of events, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, classification, problem/solution, point of view, drawing conclusions). May contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

5 **Partially Developed Refutation.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support opinion, explanations, plus attempts to discuss and/or refute the opposite point of view. Contains an adequate summary of the opposite point of view.

6 **Developed Refutation.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support opinion, explanations, plus a discussion and/or refutation of opposing point of view. Refutation is clear and explicit — summarizes opposite point of view and discusses why it is limited or incorrect.

Applying the Evaluative Guides

Scoring the Writing After the scoring guides were developed, another group of teachers (16 elementary, secondary, and college teachers) was trained to apply the scoring guidelines to the papers. The training consisted of two stages: explanation and application. On the first day, the informative scoring guide was presented and explained to the readers, along with samples of papers at each level.

After questions and discussion, the whole group applied the guide to the same set of 10 informative papers. In small groups, the readers compared the scores they assigned and then the whole group discussed each paper and reached consensus on how it should be scored. This process was repeated with another set of 10 papers, until group members felt confident that they could apply the scoring guideline consistently and reliably.

The group then scored all of the informative papers. The training procedures were repeated the next day for the narrative papers. Because the number of persuasive papers was small, they were scored by members of the team who had developed the scoring guides, rather than by the group of 16 readers.

Interrater Agreement Thirty percent of the papers in each domain received a blind second scoring — the second reader could not see the score given to the paper by the first reader. Table 2.1 presents the rate of reliability and agreement between the two readers.

The reliability coefficient is a correlation between the scores assigned to papers by the first and second readers, taking into account not only when two scorers disagreed but also the size of their disagreement. Coefficients above a .80 are considered strong and above .65 are considered good.

With a six-point scale, agreement within one score point, which is called adjacent agreement, often is also calculated. This is done because increasing the size of a scale requires that readers make more refined distinctions between each level. Any percentage adjacent agreement above 90 is considered strong. Both measures of reliability are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Interrater Reliabilities and Percent Adjacent Agreement

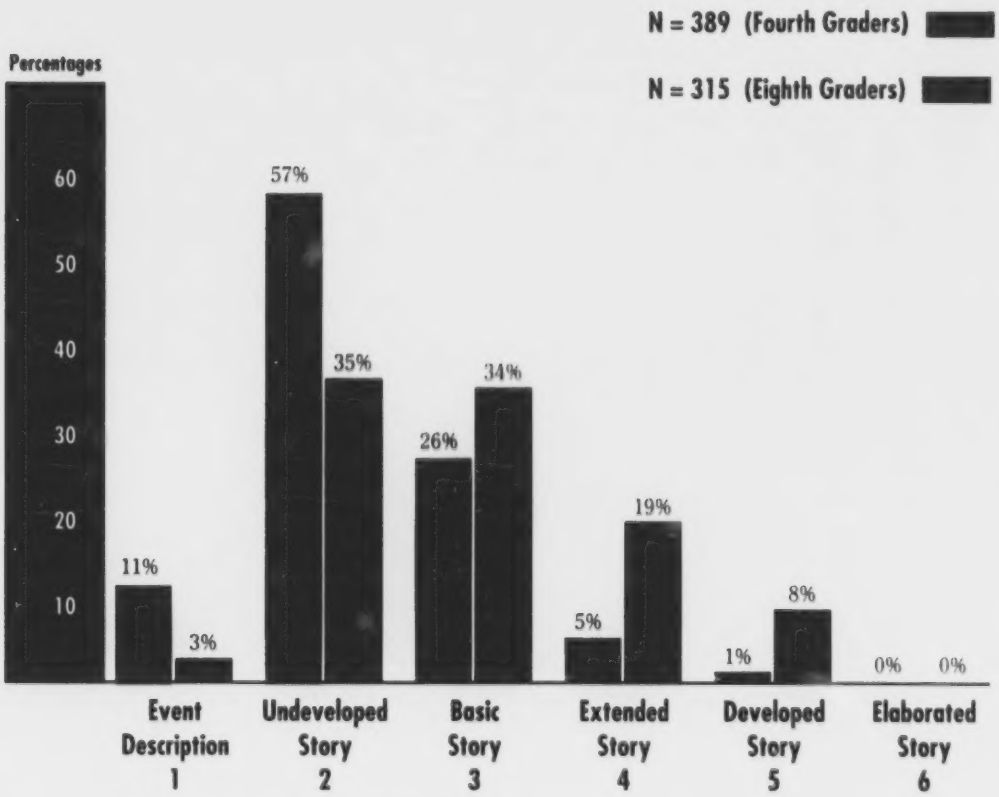
		Reliability Coefficient	Percent Adjacent Agreement
Narratives	**Fourth**	.76	100
	Eighth	.82	96
Informatives	**Fourth**	.89	100
	Eighth	.88	99
Persuasives*	**Fourth**	—	—
	Eighth	.76	96

*There was an insufficient number of persuasive papers at the fourth grade to compute valid statistics. Interpret the eighth-grade persuasive statistics with caution due to the small sample size. Note: The scoring was based on a six-point scale.

The following section presents the percentage of papers, by grade level, at each performance level of the narrative, informative, and persuasive scoring guides. Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Narrative Papers Figure 2.4 presents the percentage of narrative papers at grades 4 and 8 at each performance level of the scoring guide. At the fourth grade, 11 percent of the students' papers were classified as *Event Descriptions*, 57 percent as *Undeveloped Stories*, 26 percent as *Basic Stories*, 5 percent as *Extended Stories*, and 1 percent as *Developed Stories*.

Figure 2.4: Narrative Papers*

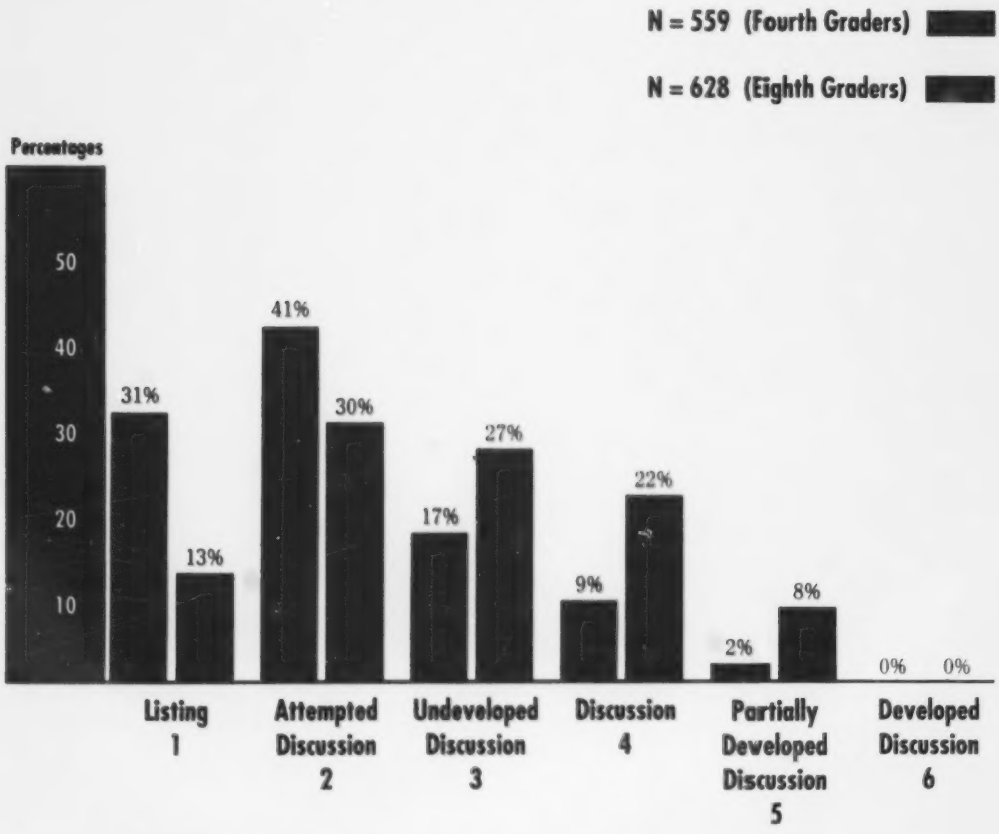


*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

As might be expected, more of the eighth-grade papers received higher ratings than did the fourth-grade papers. Three percent of the eighth-grade papers were rated as *Event Descriptions*, 35 percent as *Undeveloped Stories*, 34 percent as *Basic Stories*, 19 percent as *Extended Stories*, and 8 percent as *Developed Stories*. None of the fourth- or eighth-grade papers were classified as *Elaborated Stories*.

Informative Papers Figure 2.5 presents the percentage of informative papers at grades 4 and 8 at each performance level of the scoring guide. At the fourth grade, 31 percent of the papers were classified as *Listings*, 41 percent as *Attempted Discussions*, 17 percent as *Undeveloped Discussions*, 9 percent as *Discussions*, and 2 percent as *Partially Developed Discussions*.

Figure 2.5: Informative Papers*

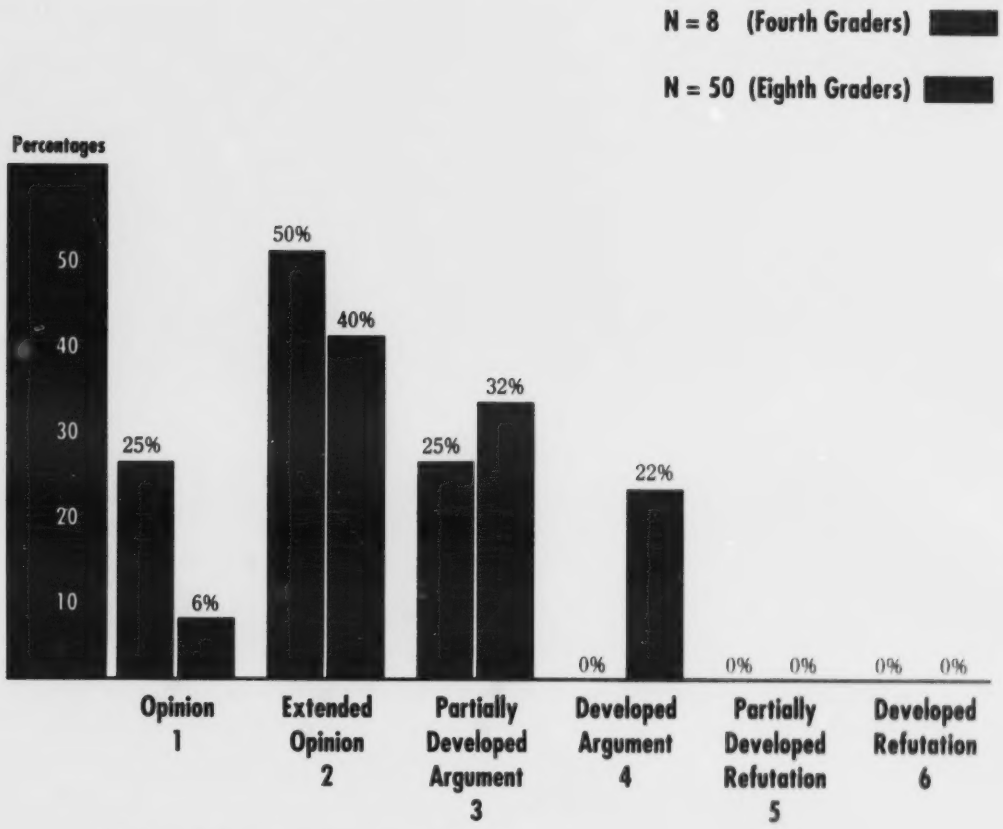


*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

As with the narratives papers, more of the eighth-grade informative papers received higher ratings than did the fourth-grade papers. Thirteen percent of the papers were classified as *Listings*, 30 percent as *Attempted Discussions*, 27 percent as *Undeveloped Discussions*, 22 percent as *Discussions*, and 8 percent as *Partially Developed Discussions*. None of the fourth- or eighth-grade papers were classified as *Developed Discussions*.

Persuasive Papers Figure 2.6 presents the percentage of persuasive papers at grades 4 and 8 at each level of the scoring guide. Please note that only eight of the papers submitted by fourth graders and 50 papers submitted by eighth graders were persuasive, so the percentages below should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 2.6: Persuasive Papers*



*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

At the fourth grade, 25 percent of the papers were classified as *Opinions*, 50 percent as *Extended Opinions*, and 25 percent as *Partially Developed Arguments*. At the eighth grade, 6 percent of the papers were classified as *Opinions*, 40 percent as *Extended Opinions*, 32 percent as *Partially Developed Arguments*, and 22 percent as *Developed Arguments*. None of the persuasive papers at either grade was classified as *Partially Developed Refutations* or *Developed Refutations*.

Writing Process Strategies Due to the interest educators have in the effect the use of writing process strategies has on students' writing, a further analysis was conducted. The scores students' school-based papers received were compared to their use of writing process strategies and use of resources for writing. Appendix B presents a detailed summary of these comparisons.

There were slight, statistically nonsignificant differences between the scores a paper received and the likelihood that the writer had employed process strategies at both fourth and eighth grades. Likewise, an analysis of students' use of resources for writing revealed nonsignificant differences between the scores their school-based papers received and their use of either their own ideas, something read, or something studied in school when writing their papers.

As was mentioned in Chapter One, although we had requested papers that showed the use of process strategies, less than half of the papers submitted contained evidence of the use of these strategies. Likewise, only half of the papers were accompanied by a description from the teacher of the activities that had generated the papers. Therefore, the comparisons made in this study between the ratings students' school-based writing received and their reported use of process strategies and resources for writing are presented for information only.

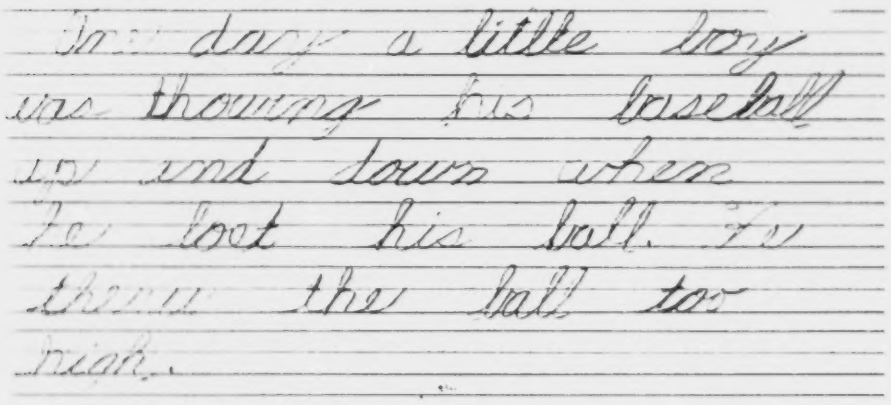
The 1992 NAEP portfolio study will collect more detailed information about writing process strategies and, if all goes well, present more complete information about the relationships between students' use of these processes and their writing achievements.

In the next three sections, examples of students' papers are presented for each performance level of the three scoring guides, along with an explanation of how each paper exemplifies the level. A note about our selections: many stories submitted by students, especially by the eighth graders, could be classified as horror stories. Our samples of the narrative scoring guide reflect this preponderance of thrillers. Also, the selection of examples was limited to the papers that could be reproduced legibly.

In addition, the papers at the upper end of the scales are much longer than those at the lower end. While length alone was not a consideration, all three scoring guides value development of ideas, information, or the elements of narratives. Therefore, it would be difficult for a brief paper (one or two paragraphs) to place above a three on any of these scales.

Examples of the Narrative Scoring Guide

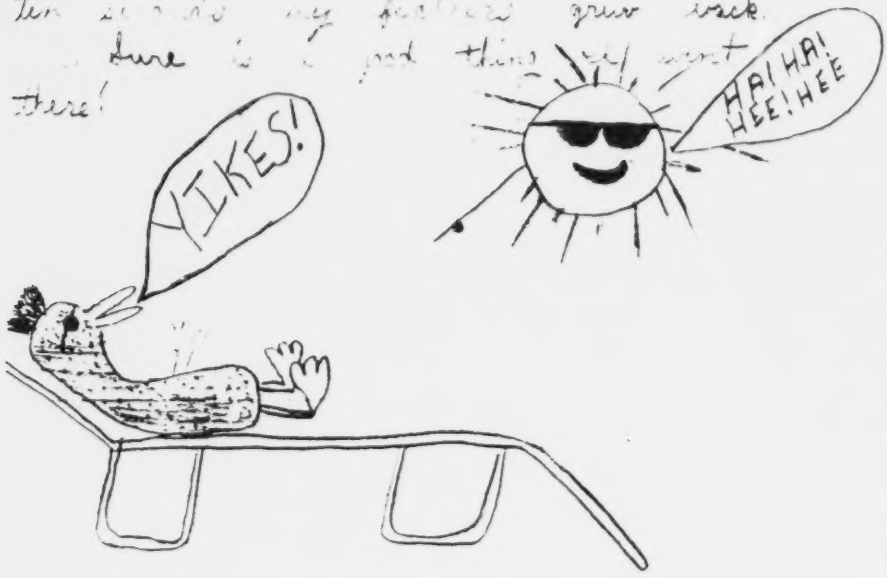
Event Description (score of 1) Papers classified as event descriptions tell about one event. Basically, they say, "such and such happened." Some of the papers in this category give details about the setting and so appear to be more elaborate stories. However, they end with a description of a single event, rather than a series of events. The paper below, written by a fourth grader, is an example of a simple *Event Description*.


In day a little boy
was throwing his baseball
up and down when
he lost his ball. He
threw the ball too
high.

Undeveloped Story (score of 2) Papers classified as *Undeveloped Stories* tell about a series of events. Basically, they say, "one day this happened, then something else happened, and then another thing happened." However, the events, as well as the setting and characters, are only briefly described. The writers give very few details about each event; the story is a listing of related events.

These stories are similar to front-page newspaper reports, where the basic facts of a story are reported (who, what, when, where) but few details about why events happened are presented. For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer uses one sentence to describe each event.

One time I went to the beach to get [illegible]. I used the word suntan oil. I accal Happerstone suntan oil. So you know what? When I put it on and my feathers fell out! I went to the duck doctor. He gave me some magic medicine I put the whole bottle of medicine on my body. In about ten seconds my feathers grew back. Sure is a good thing I went there!



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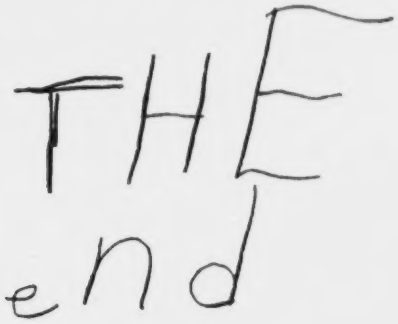
Basic Story (score of 3) In papers classified as *Basic Stories*, the writers go one step beyond a simple listing of related events. One aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or the setting) is somewhat developed. However, these stories lack a sense of cohesion and completeness. Events may be presented out of sequence, some aspect of the story may be confusing due to problems with syntax, or a key event may be unclear. For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer describes a series of events and, at the beginning, develops a problem in some detail (a librarian who puts books away too quickly). However, the resolution to the problem, although humorous, is not well developed.

Speedy Librarian

Once upon a time there was a librarian named Lisa. She could put books away faster than anybody. One day she put books away, and took them out again so fast. The children said "slow down so we can have a chance to look at the books in the Library." So she slowed down for fifteen minutes. Then thought of a cure so next time they would be able to look without books moving all the time.

"The next time we go to library we will chain her to the seat for a half hour or until we're done" the children laughed. They chained her to the seat right when they arrived. Every time they went they chained her down. She was finally cured.



Extended Story (score of 4) *Extended Stories* go beyond *Basic Stories* in that many of the events in these stories are elaborated to some degree. This degree of development gives a sense of a sequence of distinct story episodes. Details are given about the setting, the characters' goals, problems to be solved, and the key events. Yet, these stories may be somewhat incomplete in that the characters' goals may be left unresolved or the problem posed in the story's opening never solved. The ending may not match the beginning or the story's ending may be inconsistent with the internal logic established throughout the rest of the story. Or, as in the example below (written by an eighth grader), they may be very satisfying, yet not elaborately developed.

It is important to note that, while *Extended Stories* are not as elaborated or complex as are *Developed Stories* and *Elaborated Stories*, they are successful stories — all of the key story elements and events are clearly presented. They are the simplest type of complete story on this scale.

Joey slowly walked his new bicycle down the driveway. He couldn't believe his father let him open a present this morning. Joey picked the bicycle. It was a new 10 speed but it had to be assembled. So he worked all afternoon on it. He finished just in time for a quick ride. He didn't get all the reflectors on, but he could do that tomorrow.

He straddled the new bicycle and started slowly up the road. He shifted up several gears and built up speed. He could

hear the loud clicking of the rear tire. He got to a steep hill and rode down the incline. He heard the clicking grow to a steady buzz as he coasted faster and faster.

He didn't realize he was so close to the highway. He saw a pair of headlights headed toward him from his left. He locked his brakes. The driver in the car did the same, but Joey still slid out to the highway. He felt a tremendous pain to his leg. Then another to his head. His vision faded away. He could hear people shouting and talking. Then his hearing started to fade. The last thing he could hear before he lost consciousness was the slow soft clicking of a bicycle tire

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Developed Story (score of 5) *Developed Stories* describe a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements are somewhat elaborated. Yet, one aspect of these stories is not well developed, such as the ending or a crucial event. In the example below (written by an eighth grader), each episode is somewhat developed, but could be further elaborated.

The lights were very dim in the reform school where the girls lay in there beds.

Lisa a girl at the school was very afraid of dark, tight places. She would scream and cry if someone locked her in a small, dark room.

She had told stories of her step-mother locking her in an icebox for a punishment.

"I tried not to breath," Lisa said. "I didn't want the air to get too low but after a while I had to breath".

Lisa looked like a nice girl. She had long blonde hair, stood about 5'2" and weighed about 115 pounds.

She had been an orphan for ten years until a lady came into the orphanage and took her home. The lady soon adopted her.

After a while the lady got tired of her so she put her in a reform school.

It was night time at the reform school and the girls were tired. Miss Bertha came in and shut the lights off and made the girls lay down.

A half hour later the reform school grew quiet. The girls had fallen asleep.

Lisa began to toss and turn. A vision of her step mother came into her mind.

"Lisa ~~got up~~ you have been very bad lately you have to be punished, her stepmother said guiltily.

No, No!, Lisa shouted still half asleep.

Lisa ran out through the hallway until she bumped into a huge, black door that had a rusty, half broken sign on it. Lisa opened the door as fast as she could.

When she got the door open she ran in the room.

The room was dark and cold. It had the smell of damp walls allmost like that of a very old dungeon.

When she got the door shut she locked it. After she locked the door she turned around and faced it.

The vision of her stepmother walked through the door, and went towards her slowly.

Lisa walking backwards tripped and fell into a coffin! The coffin door shut and locked.

"Let me out," Lisa screamed!"

The air inside of the coffin was getting very low. She was getting weaker and weaker every second.

At the distance she could hear a faint evil laugh. A laugh that she did not recognize, but had heard before.

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Elaborated Story (score of 6) No papers were considered to be *Elaborated Stories*. To be classified as elaborated, stories had to present a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements were well developed. Goals or problems introduced in the beginning were well resolved by the end, characters' motives were well developed, and the entire story was a cohesive, unified whole.

In the example below, the eighth-grade writer of "The Black Rose" retells the plot of a Halloween movie. In it, the writer effectively presents each episode, leading to a spine-tingling ending. The only discordant note is the occasional switching of narrative voice between first person and third person. A revising of this story that included a consistent use of narrative voice would make this an example of an *Elaborated Story*. (As is, this story received a score of 5.)

The black Rose

The night was very stormy, the wind shook the trees like a limp doll. The rain pounded on the windows like a drum. Tonight, the night of September, Friday the 13th, a thin young girl of about 17 was getting ready to babysit. Her name was Bethany Miller. She had been a steady babysiter since about last year, therefor she is saving money to by a new car. So far she had saved $2,190.

Bethany's mother and father were out at a movie. Suddenly the phone rang, Beth sprinted down the stairs to catch the phone. Beth picked up the phone to the voice of Mrs. Perkins, the woman, She was to babysit for.

"Bethany, I'm afraid that I don't need a babysitter tonight. John and I decided not to go out because of the storm."

"Well alright, thats fine." and then our conversation ended. Actually I was kind of glad that I didn't have to baby sit, for the reason that I didn't like to go out on stormy nights, but rather curl up and read a book or watch t.v.

Beth decided to see just how bad the storm was. So she walked over to the window. The rain was so wicked that it seemed sheild Beth from the outside.

Just after Beth turned on the t.v. and sat down, the phone rang agian. Beth took her time answering the phone. It was Beth's mom.

"Honey, I'm afraid your father and I won't be home tonight. The bridge we take to get back home got flooded. Now I have a feeling the power may shut off. Trees are falling every where, so get some matches and candles and the flashlight down cellar, or and you might as well get the radio!"

And after my mom gave me a few more helpful hints, among many other things our conversation finally ended.

Chapt. 2

After I had gathered the matches, candles and radio, I went down to the cellar to get the flashlight. The cellar smelt damp. In a far corner you could hear the water from the storm trickling. As I started my way back up stairs, the lights shut off. I turned on my flashlight, then I started to hear tapping on the windows and knocking on the door, my heart started to beat fast, then as I walked up the stairs I convinced my self that it was probably just a tree knocking on everything.

Now that the power had gone out, I figured I'd turn on the radio for some comfort. Just as I was turning it on I caught a news clip about a murderer who had escaped from jail. His name was John Henry. The name caught my attention. That man was the man I heard about 2 year ago that killed 40 nurses in Baton Rouge. He was known to leave a black rose by each dead ~~victim~~ after he had slit there throat.

Than again the phone rang, I was kind of glad. I would like to talk to someone. as I picked up the phone and repeatedly called hello. I could hear nothing but deep breathing. Than the person on the other end hung up.

After I hung up, I was very upset and scared. Than the phone rang again, and I decided that it was the same person whom the first time thaught he had the wrong number.

"Hello", I said

"Are you alone". a distant scratchy voice came over the phone.

"Who is this". I screamed

"I'm watching you". the voice said. Then I heard the voice shut up as the phone got hung up.

I trembled with fright. "Who was that". I asked myself "Mabey it was just a kid playing", but I didn't care, I was still scared stiff. But hey, any way how could any one see me

when its dark and you can't see through the windows anyway.

Even though Beth had thought of many things that it could be, she still was scared.

as Beth was curled up on the couch, with a book in one hand and and the flashlight in the other, she was jumped by a noise. as her ears perked up to listen, she could than make out the noise; it was a scratching noise coming from the cellar, almost like a cat pawing at the door, but she didn't have a cat, then it stopped. Beth was terrified with fear. She wanted to call her mother but she didn't dare move from her secured position. While Beth sunk into the blue cushions of her couch. She now heard footsteps upstairs heavy, loud footsteps that seemed to make the ceiling shake. Beth wasn't sure if this was her imagination or not. After the footsteps had stopped. The phone rang, forgetting the other phone

calls Beth jumped up to answer the phone. This just had to be her mom calling. She thought with extreme excitement.

"Mom", Beth questioned

"I'm still watching you!" a muffled deep voice replied.

With out any words Beth hung up the phone and started to scream and cry. Beth could no longer ignore the phone calls and noises, she finally made up her mind to call the police, but when she picked up the phone she heard deep breathing once more.

"Hello, Hello", she stuttered

"I'm in the house!"

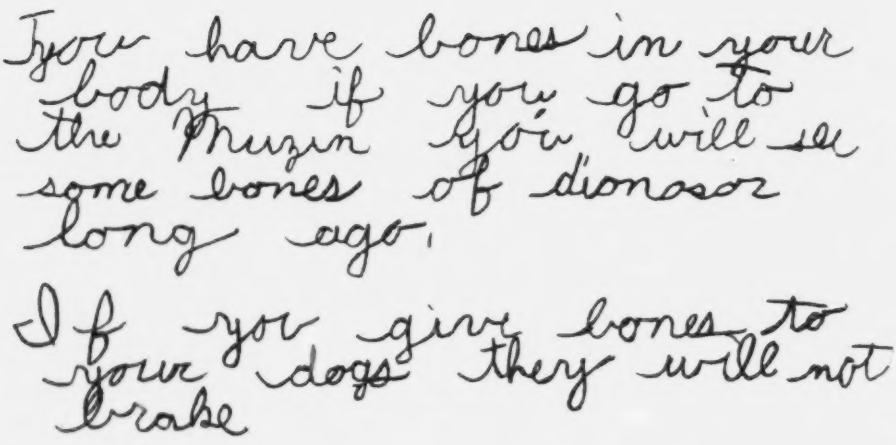
With those words Beth could no longer take it; she once more tried the phone. this time she got through, but just as she was finishing her name, the line got cut off. Then she turned around and a tall man with a black mask and black outfit. was standing holding the phone line, then he dropped the line and held a terribly big butcher knife over his head and...

Chapt 3.

The storm had cleared and Beths parents were arriving home. They opened the door and dropped there coats. When Beths mom looked over toward the kitchen, she saw a trail of blood, She screamed in horror, Beths father ran over to where he saw his daughter lying in a puddle of blood with a limp black rose on her chest.

Examples of the Informative Scoring Guide

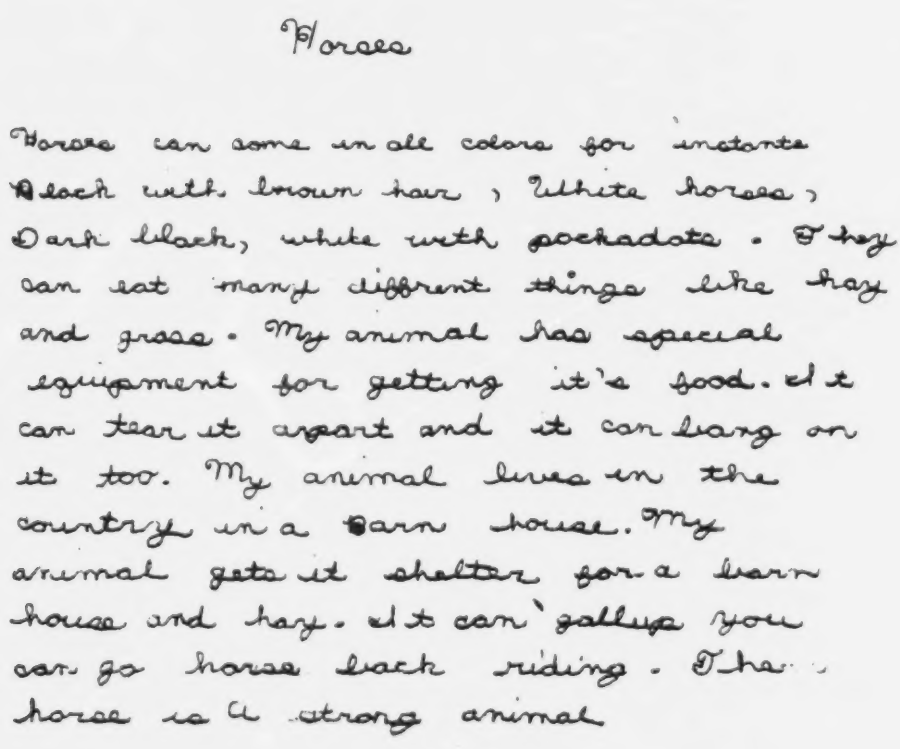
Listing (score of 1) In the first category, *Listing*, the writer presents pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic. While the papers may contain a range of information about the topics, no attempt is made to relate the ideas or information. For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer lists a series of facts about bones, but these facts are not connected to each other, except that they are each about bones.


You have bones in your body if you go to the Muzin you will se some bones of dionasor long ago.

If you give bones to your dogs they will not brake

Attempted Discussion (score of 2) As with papers classified as *Listings*, *Attempted Discussions* present a range of information or ideas about a topic, but they go beyond *Listings* because some attempt is made to establish relationships between the pieces of information or ideas. However, these relationships are not clearly established. The ideas or information may be incomplete or undeveloped.

For example, in the paper below the fourth-grade writer presents a range of information about horses and, in the first and second sentences, begins to develop the subtopics of color and diet by giving examples. Yet, these examples are only mentioned in passing and are not developed enough to present a generalized view of horses supported by detail.



Horses

Horses can come in all colors for instants Black with brown hair, White horses, Dark black, white with pochadots. They can eat many diffrent things like hay and grass. My animal has special equipment for getting it's food. It can tear it apart and it can hang on it too. My animal lives in the country in a barn house. My animal gets it shelter for a barn house and hay. It can gallop you can go horse back riding. The horse is a strong animal

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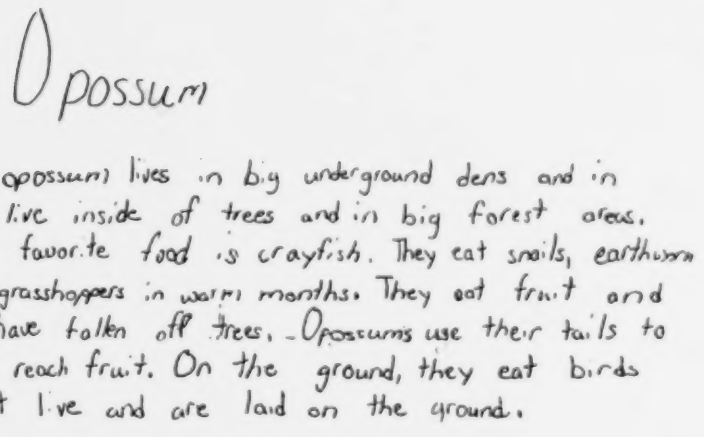
Undeveloped Discussion (score of 3) Papers classified as *Undeveloped Discussions* go beyond *Attempted Discussions* in that the attempt to establish relationships between ideas or information is more successful. Clear connections are made between information or ideas in at least one part of the paper. However, the information and ideas are not well developed. They may be confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

For example, in the paper below (written by an eighth grader), the writer explains how watching television might influence students. This is more than a simple assertion that television influences viewers and more than a listing of the ways it can influence viewers. Through a brief description of a scenario, the writer explores the mechanism by which students can be influenced. While this approach is effective, the ideas are not developed or elaborated: the paper is more the beginning of a discussion on the topic than a complete discussion of the issues involved.

Student might see a television show that the student likes. Then the student may want to be like the actor. The student may see the actor settle a score with a bad guy with a weapon. When the student comes up to a battle, the student may use a weapon just as the actor did. Because student can't effectivly solve problems they consider using a weapon to aid them in their battle.

Discussion (score of 4) *Discussions* are more complex than *Attempted Discussions* or *Undeveloped Discussions* because, in at least one section, the writers clearly relate the ideas or information. A signal of this level of development is the use of rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, definition, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking by importance, exemplification) to relate some of the information and ideas presented. However, these papers do not take the next step and relate all of the ideas or information presented to an overarching purpose. Thus, while these papers retain their focus on the main topic being addressed, they also seem to skip from subtopic to subtopic.

For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer gives a range of information about opossums. Each paragraph deals with a specific aspect of opossums and the writer uses examples to illustrate and explain these aspects (i.e., in the third paragraph, the writer employs several examples to illustrate the small size of baby opossums). Yet, the paper does not have an overall sense of purpose — there is no apparent reason for the ordering of these pieces of information about opossums.



Opossum

The opossum lives in big underground dens and in trees. Babies live inside of trees and in big forest areas.

Their favorite food is crayfish. They eat snails, earthworm crickets and grasshoppers in warm months. They eat fruit and berries that have fallen off trees. Opossums use their tails to swing and to reach fruit. On the ground, they eat birds and eggs that live and are laid on the ground.

Opossum's young when they are born are no bigger than a honeybee. It would take twenty-three baby opossums to weigh one penny. One teaspoon can hold fifteen to eighteen newborn opossums. The newborn opossums have no ears. It takes eight weeks for a baby opossum to weigh twelve grams. On the 80th day the opossum comes out of the mother's pouch. The little babies are weaned 95th to 100th day.

The size of the grown opossum is as big as a house cat. The head and body length of a opossum is twelve to twenty inches. Male opossums are fourty inches long and the tail length is twelve to fifteen inches.

The opossum is famous for playing opossum. They hang by their tails in trees. Opossums hold on with their tails to climb from branch to branch.

I found a little baby opossum. It was about ten day old. I raised it for a couple of days. I put hay and a wash cloth for him to cover up with, I feed him with a little baby bottle and a shot syringe and we gave him the name Pooh. One day we came home from church and he had died. Opossums are hard to raise.

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Partially Developed Discussion (score of 5) In *Partially Developed Discussions*, information and relationships are established and well developed, with explanations and supporting details. The paragraphs tend to be unified and well formed. However, the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose, audience, and cohesion. The writers of these papers present a wide range of information on a topic, organize this information clearly, develop most of the aspects of this topic, yet do not create a context for their discussion that envisions a wider communicative purpose.

For example, the fourth-grade writer of the paper below has a definite voice, exhibiting much enthusiasm about the topic. Each paragraph develops a piece of information about bison, including transitions from one subtopic to the next. However, what is missing is a sense of audience and the overall purpose for writing about bison. Despite the writer's clear voice and effective management of details, it is unclear to whom the paper is directed and for what purpose.

The animal im going to talk about in this report it so tall, so big, so heavey youll ever believe it! Irst going to talk about its size. This big woolly mammal is five and a half to six feet tall! Can you imagine an animal on four legs being six feet tall? Boy! and in North America!? It even weighs two thousand pounds! The bison is also so strong even if more then Ten wolves are around one bison it can last for hours on end and even kill a few wolves in the process!

Now its time to talk about how it looks. The American bison looks so powerful enemies are probably even scared off sometimes. Its rippling shoulder muscles make it look like some body builder that has been working on weights a century

Now its time for the history of the bison. There were once millions of buffalo roaming in what we now call the mainland wildly but now only 15,000 are left. In 1889 there were only 551 remaining. But later they made a brilliant comeback to have 15,000 wild and 15,000 in captivity.

And now.... predators. The bisons main predator besides man the wolf. If a buffalo wand if, more than likely it will become dinner for a hungry pack of wolves. However, it is not an easy light for the wolves for the bison will put up an amazing effort to stay alive. Often a bison will kill a few wolves but only to die in a pool of blood and sweat. But if a bison does not get cornered sure safety is the herd. The wolf cannot run more than 25 miles an so if it comes down to a chase the wolf is most likely to lose. But the wolf does have powerful jaws, so if on some rare occasion the wolf wins this chase the wolf will devour the bison and then dine on the bison with the rest of its pack.

And last but not least the thing its time for is man, and the man im going to talk about is Buffalo Bill Cody. He killed endless numbers of bison just for fun! His ranch was in North Platte, Nebraska and he was born in Iowa. He was probably one of the main reasons that the buffalo population dropped so drastically. He and other buffalo killing fanatics are the main reason that the American bison population will probably never reach one million again.

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Developed Discussion (score of 6) For papers to be considered *Developed Discussions* they had to contain all the elements of the previous category, and also present a coherent sense of purpose and audience. A signal of this level of writing is the overt use of organizational structure and excellent command of the conventions of written English. No papers in the 1990 sample were rated as *Developed Discussions*.

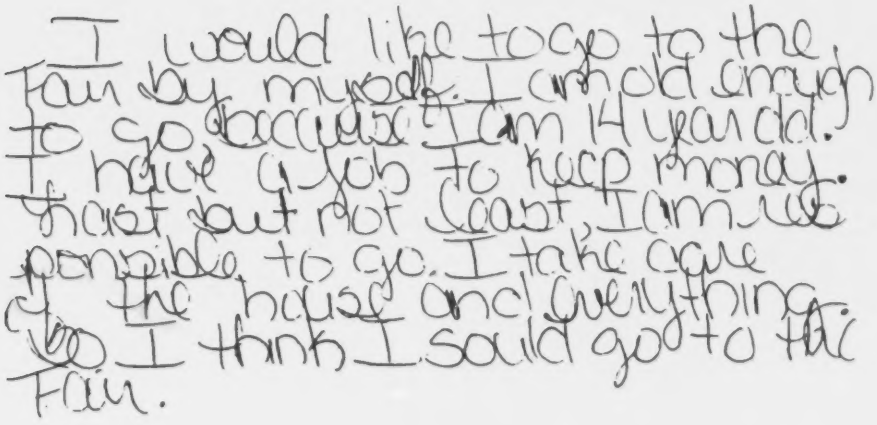
Examples of the Persuasive Scoring Guide

Opinion (score of 1) In the first type of persuasive writing, *Opinions*, the writers assert an opinion, but do not develop or explain this opinion in any detail. Sometimes they give reasons to support their opinion, but these reasons are unrelated to the opinion or contradict one another. For example, the paper below, written by a fourth grader, states an opinion about trick-or-treating ("it is fun") with one reason to support this opinion ("you get lots of candy"). Then the writer gives several pieces of information relating to the danger of trick-or-treating that seem either unrelated or contradictory to the opinion that trick-or-treating is fun.

Trick-o-Treating is fun because you can go and get lots of candy. It is not good to go to the houses that your parents or you don't know. It is safer if you go to carnivals. On halloween there are lots of people out. So be careful on halloween night.

Extended Opinion (score of 2) *Extended Opinions* include a statement of opinion and reasons to support the opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly presented or the explanations are confusing.

For example, the paper below, written by an eighth grader, states an opinion ("I would like to go to the fair by myself.") and lists several reasons in support of this opinion ("I am old enough," "I have a job to keep money," and "I am responsible."). The last reason is somewhat elaborated ("I take care of the house and everything."). However, this elaboration is not directly connected to the opinion — it does not explain why taking care of the house makes one responsible enough to go to a fair alone.


I would like to go to the Fair by myself. I am old enough to go because I am 14 year old. I have a job to keep money. last but not least, I am responsible to go. I take care of the house and everything. So I think I could go to the Fair.

Partially Developed Argument (score of 3) *Partially Developed Arguments* include an opinion statement and clear reasons to support the opinion. They also contain attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations given are not developed or elaborated. These papers may also contain an implicit reference to an opposing point of view opposite to their own.

For example, the eighth-grade writer of the paper below states an opinion ("Students must behave during open lunch.") and gives elaborated reasons to support this opinion. However, the reasons and elaborations are confusing. The first paragraph seems to relate, implicitly, to an opposing point of view, the second paragraph to potential rewards, and the third paragraph to actual rewards.

Students must behave during open lunch. One reason why students should behave is that it inowes them open lunch. When students act silly they're never sure that they'll be able to talk to their friends tomorrow. When students know that they're on open lunch they'll act happier and more open minded then if they were on closed lunch.

Another reason students should behave is that if they stay on open lunch long enough they might get an award. As a reward the school.

might extend that lunch period. Also for a reward the school might take 50% off dance tickets for that lunch period.

Finally, open lunch itself is a reward. Students get open lunch because they were responsible and mature enough to look after themselves. And since open lunch is a type of reward students should treat it that way. In conclution students need to behave on open lunch not because they're told to but because they want open lunch.

Developed Argument (score of 4) In *Developed Arguments*, writers state their opinions with reasons to support those opinions. They also include at least one explanation that is well developed. Rhetorical devices (such as sequence of events, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and classification) may be used to develop the explanation. These papers may also contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

For example, in the paper below, the eighth-grade writer presents a clear opinion, with elaborated reasons to support the opinion. In addition, in the third paragraph, the writer briefly mentions and addresses the opposing point of view.

Twelve Month Schools

..... I believe schools should not remain open year-round because the idea is impractical. Throughout a normal ten month school year teachers teach pupils skills and knowledge for their future. Often enough, the stress for both students and teachers is high by the end of these ten months, not to mention the effects of twelve non-stop months.

..... Summer Vacation, the two month hiatus, between one school year and another, is a vital break. It allows pupils and teachers to rejuvenate oneself and relax. Teachers and students alike enjoy the break which is vital in order "to get away from it all."

..... When school budgets run low, physical education is always cut first on the flimsy account that "it isn't as important as math", or more simply "it's expendable." Students need to exercise as well as learn so they remain physically and mentally fit. A summer break of baseball and other sports helps supply this.

..... Schools should not stay open regularly during the summer unless dress code is changed to suit comfortability and summer sessions are reduced to summer school hours. If American schools are to remain #1, attempts should be made, educational wise, to improve the quality of teaching not the quantity.

Partially Developed Refutation and Developed Refutation (scores of 5 and 6) Of the 58 papers classified as *Persuasive*, none fit into these last two categories. Yet, the team of teachers who developed the scoring guides emphasized that these two performance levels of persuasive writing should be described. Noting the limited number of persuasive papers received and the important role refutation plays in persuasive discourse, the team wanted to identify the characteristics of persuasive papers that contained more overt and complex refutations.

Partially Developed Refutations include a clear opinion statement, with reasons to support the opinion and elaborated explanations. These papers also contain an adequate summary of the opposite point of view and may include an attempt to discuss the opposing position.

Developed Refutations are papers that have opinion statements, reasons to support the opinion, explanations of these reasons, plus a discussion and/or refutation of the opposing point of view. The refutation is clear and explicit, including a discussion of why the opposing viewpoint is limited or incorrect.

Summary of Performance Across Domains

In order to develop a portfolio of students' writing at grades 4 and 8, we summarized their performance across the three domains by grade level. Table 2.2 presents the fourth graders' performance at each domain by grouping the levels of each scale into low (scores of 1 and 2), medium (scores of 3 and 4), and high (scores of 5 and 6).

While slightly more of the informative and persuasive papers submitted by the fourth graders received higher ratings than did their narrative papers, in general, the ratings assigned papers across the three domains of narrative, informative, and persuasive were very similar.

Table 2.2: Fourth Graders' Classroom-Based Writing Performance*

	Low (1 or 2) %	Medium (3 or 4) %	High (5 or 6) %
Narratives	69	30	1
Informatives	72	26	2
Persuasives**	72	28	0

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

**Interpret statistics on persuasive papers with caution due to small sample size.

Table 2.3 presents the eighth graders' performance at the low, medium, and high levels of each genre. As with the fourth graders, there was little difference in the distribution of scores among the three domains. As might be expected, compared with the fourth grade, more eighth-grade papers received medium and high ratings.

Table 2.3: Eighth Graders' Classroom-Based Writing Performance*

	Low (1 or 2) %	Medium (3 or 4) %	High (5 or 6) %
Narratives	40	51	9
Informatives	45	48	7
Persuasives**	50	50	0

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

**Interpret statistics on persuasive papers with caution due to small sample size.

Summary

The results of this study indicate that more than half of the fourth-grade narrative papers simply listed a series of related events, while over one-quarter contained some elaboration. Few of the fourth-grade stories contained developed characters or plots. Also, approximately one-third of the fourth-grade informative papers were simple listings of information or ideas. More than half of the fourth-grade informative papers attempted to discuss topics by trying to establish relationships between the pieces of information or ideas. In 9 percent of the fourth-grade informative papers relationships were successfully established between several ideas in the papers. As might be expected at grade 4, few (only 2 percent) wrote papers where almost all of the information was related. For persuasive writing, the few papers that were written by fourth graders were opinion statements, some with explanation. In two papers, the argument was partially developed.

The eighth-grade narrative papers were, for the most part, simple or basic stories (68 percent). Compared with the fourth graders, fewer eighth graders wrote *Undeveloped Stories* and more wrote *Basic Stories*. As might be expected, more eighth graders (about one-quarter) than fourth graders wrote *Extended* and *Developed Stories*. The same trend holds true for the eighth-grade informative papers, with only 13 percent of the eighth graders simply listing information or ideas. The older students were more successful at establishing relationships between ideas and information: fewer eighth-grade than fourth-grade papers were rated as *Attempted Discussions* (30 percent) and more were rated as *Undeveloped Discussions* or *Discussions* (49 percent). At the upper end of the informative scale, 8 percent of the eighth graders wrote papers in which almost all of the information presented was cogently related. For persuasive writing, fewer eighth than fourth graders wrote simple *Opinion* statements (6 percent compared to 25 percent, respectively) and fewer wrote *Extended Opinions* (40 percent compared to 50 percent, respectively). However, it is interesting that similar percentages of fourth and eighth graders wrote papers classified as *Partially Developed Arguments*, while almost one-quarter of the eighth graders wrote *Developed Arguments*.

It is important to note that the panel that developed the scoring guides, while depending for the most part on the group of papers submitted by participants in this study to specify a range of performance, also relied on their experience as teachers and teacher educators in establishing the upper ends of each of the three scales. They felt it was possible and desirable to project, based on the few upper-range papers and their own knowledge of written discourse, the key features of complex narrative, informative, and persuasive papers. Likewise, it should be noted that, in the scoring guides developed for this study, creativity independent of development did not influence the scores papers received.

3

Comparing Methods of Assessment

Collecting samples of students' writing produced under traditional essay assessment methods and writing produced under more typical classroom-based conditions creates a unique opportunity to compare these methods of assessment. It makes possible an exploration of a number of questions concerning what we learn about students' writing from essay tests, on the one hand, and from school-based samples of writing, on the other.

The first part of this chapter compares the key features of these two approaches to assessment — the characteristics of the texts generated and the nature of the processes in which students engaged. In the second section, the ratings that a subset of the students' writing received on the regular NAEP writing assessment are compared with the ratings their classroom-based writing received. In the last part of this chapter, the major lessons learned from this pilot portfolio study are discussed.

Features of the Assessments

Characteristics of the Writing Earlier in this report, several characteristics of students' writing were analyzed: type of writing, intended audience, type of activity, and length of papers. These will be the focus of the comparison between the writing provided under traditional assessment conditions and the writing collected for the school-based study.

In the 1990 NAEP writing assessment, students responded to two 15-minute prompts.[21] As a result of an elaborate development and review process, which included field testing, NAEP prompts are characteristically very clear and specific. The prompts span three types of writing: informative, narrative, and persuasive. In 1990, students were asked to write to a variety of audiences (i.e., teachers, principals, school newspapers, peers, political figures) about a range of topics. Some of the topics included: (1) writing a letter to a company requesting a course of action; (2) writing a newspaper article based on given

[21] The 1990 NAEP assessment was a trend assessment — prompts developed in 1984 were readministered in 1990 unchanged. Due to recent changes in the field of writing, the 1992 NAEP writing assessment consists of 25-minute prompts at fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades and several 50-minute prompts at the eighth and twelfth grades.

information about a haunted house; (3) writing a paper taking a stand on the dissection of frogs in a science class; (4) writing a letter to a radio station manager convincing him/her to allow the class to visit the radio station; and (5) writing a story about imagined adventures with a flashlight that had special powers. The prompts required that students draw on their own experiences as well as on information presented in the prompt. Given the limited amount of time students had to write in response to the prompts, it is not surprising that, in the 1990 NAEP assessment, the average length of fourth graders' responses was 34 words and the average length of eighth graders' responses was 52 words.

The breadth and diversity of texts submitted in school-based writing assessments are dependent upon the kinds of writing instruction students receive. The writing submitted for this school-based study indicated that participating students were mostly writing narrative and informative pieces. The activities that generated their writing rarely appeared to have provided students with a sense of the audiences or purposes for their writing. The assignments varied greatly in specificity and elaboration, as did the length of students' papers. As was presented in Chapter One, the median length of fourth-grade classroom-based papers was 84 words and of eighth-grade classroom-based papers was 140 words. In addition, the majority of students' school-based writing was longer than the average of their responses to the NAEP writing assessment. Ninety percent of both the fourth and the eighth graders' school-based papers were longer than the average length of their responses to the NAEP writing assessment.

Thus, school-based writing assessments yielded significantly longer texts and have the potential to yield a variety of text types that are written to diverse audiences. However, all of these features are dependent upon the amount of time and attention paid to writing instruction. On the other hand, NAEP writing assessments, and other timed writing assessments, provide a consistent view of a particular variety of student writing: writing produced in a fixed time period and on a specified topic.

Writing Processes In this study, we have referred to several writing process strategies: major revising, minor revising, prewriting, conferencing, and referring to sources. The NAEP writing assessment, because it occurs in a single sitting, does not allow for much revision, major or minor. During the assessment, students are not able to refer to sources or to conference with peers or teachers.[22] One of the principal limitations of single-sitting writing assessments is that the writing produced essentially represents writers' first drafts. These methods of assessment yield little information about students' revision strategies.

[22] The 1992 NAEP writing assessment includes a prewriting page before each prompt, where students can jot down ideas, make notes, or plan their writing.

As was discussed earlier, for this study of classroom-based writing there were limitations in the kinds of information we received about students' use of process strategies. Therefore, this pilot study yielded little specific information about process strategies. In general, school-based writing assessments offer the opportunity to collect evidence about very complex writing processes. Students are able to include all the prewriting, drafting, and revising that was involved in the production of their texts. This method has the potential to yield a rich array of information about the processes the writers engaged in, as well as the outcomes of these processes.

Comparing Students' Performance

A comparison was conducted of students' performance on the NAEP writing assessment and their school-based writing sample. As a preliminary step in testing for relationships between the scores students' papers received on their school-based writing and the NAEP writing assessment, we wanted to make comparisons by type of writing, under the hypothesis that students who wrote excellent stories in a timed assessment situation would probably write excellent stories under classroom-based writing situations. We wanted to make comparisons within a type of task; that is, if a student submitted an informative piece, we wanted to compare it with the student's performance on the informative NAEP assessment task, and likewise for the narrative and persuasive tasks. Then, if relationships were found within type of task, we would look for relationships between overall performance on the NAEP writing assessment and the school-based writing samples.

However, we faced a problem in making these comparisons. Due to the emphasis placed on informative and persuasive writing and the complex sampling design used to collect the NAEP writing assessment, none of the students selected for this study wrote narratives for the NAEP writing assessment. In addition, very few students submitted persuasive school-based writing samples. Given these limitations, we elected to focus only on those students who submitted informative school-based writing samples and compare the scores they received on these samples with their performance on the NAEP informative prompts.

The sampling design of the 1992 NAEP school-based writing study ensures that all three types of writing will be represented. In addition, we are requesting multiple pieces of classroom-based writing from students in 1992 and asking that these samples represent several types of writing. In this way, we hope to be able to make more substantial comparisons of students' performance on these two methods of writing assessment.

Because students' NAEP assessment pieces were scored on a four-point primary trait scale and their school-based writing on a six-point scale, we

grouped each scale into high and low categories to simplify and facilitate comparisons. On the NAEP assessment scales, scores of 1 and 2 were placed in the low category; 3 and 4 in the high. For students' school-based writing, papers that received scores of 1, 2, or 3 were grouped in the low category; papers with scores of 4, 5, or 6 were placed in the high category. The correlation between these two pieces of writing was low, .16 for fourth graders and .06 for eighth graders. Presented below are the details on this comparison by grade level.

Fourth Graders As Figure 3.1 shows, 72 percent of the fourth graders received a low score on both the NAEP writing assessment and their school-based writing. Likewise, 5 percent received a high score on both types of writing. However, 16 percent of the fourth graders received a low score on their school-based writing and a high score on the NAEP writing assessment. Eight percent received a low score on the NAEP writing assessment, and a high score on their school-based writing.

Figure 3.1: Percentages of Fourth-Grade Students*

		Scores on NAEP Writing Assessment	
		1, 2	3, 4
Scores on School-based Writing	1, 2, 3	72% N = 470	16% N = 103
	4, 5, 6	8% N = 50	5% N = 30

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Because of the high numbers of students whose writing received a score of 1 or 2 on the NAEP writing assessment and a score of 1, 2, or 3 on the school-based writing, this distribution is not that informative. There appears to be an overall consistency between fourth graders' performance on both types of writing samples — only 24 percent of the students received very different scores. The distribution is much different for the eighth graders, whose scores on both assessments were more spread out over the range of score points.

Eighth Graders As Figure 3.2 shows, 41 percent of the eighth graders received a low score on both the NAEP writing assessment and their school-

based writing. Likewise, 14 percent received a high score on both types of writing. However, 29 percent of the eighth graders received a low score on their school-based writing and a high score on the NAEP writing assessment, and 16 percent received a low score on the NAEP writing assessment and a high score on their school-based writing.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of Eighth-Grade Students*

Scores on School-based Writing	Scores on NAEP Writing Assessment: 1, 2	Scores on NAEP Writing Assessment: 3, 4
1, 2, 3	41% N = 370	29% N = 258
4, 5, 6	16% N = 142	14% N = 129

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Thus, 45 percent of the students received rather different scores on their NAEP writing assessment and on their school-based writing. In considering these comparisons, it is important to remember that, due to limitations in our sampling design, only a subgroup of our total participants, 723 fourth graders and 454 eighth graders, are represented.

One explanation for the low levels of correlation between eighth graders' performance on these two methods of assessment is that the different procedures and features of the methods of assessment may result in a sampling of different aspects of students' writing abilities. Composing clear pieces of writing in response to specific prompts involves one set of writing abilities; composing a longer text, over several days, after consultation with others, in response to a general prompt or one's own ideas, provides information about a different, more complex set of writing processes.

Lessons Learned

The main purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary exploration of methods for collecting, describing, and evaluating classroom-based writing on a large scale in preparation for a larger portfolio study as part of the 1992 NAEP assessment. From our experiences in 1990, we learned useful lessons on

how to improve collection procedures that will be implemented in the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study. This includes giving teachers advance notice, in the fall, that we will be collecting student portfolios in the spring and providing students with folders to collect their writing. Also, students are asked to write a brief letter describing the pieces of writing they select and teachers are asked to complete a brief questionnaire describing the classroom activities that generated the students' writing. The methods developed for describing and evaluating students' writing will be further refined and expanded in the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study.

Taking a more general view, this study allows for an examination of four key issues in developing new modes of assessment: comparability (Does the assessment method offer a standard against which students' work can be compared?); authorship (Does the assessment method provide a means for establishing the author of the writing?); coverage (Does the assessment method provide a way for measuring a broad range of learning outcomes deemed important by educators and the general public?); and relevancy (Does the assessment method relate to the goals and methods of writing instruction?).

Comparability Can a large-scale system for assessing classroom-based writing provide a standard means for comparing students' writing achievements?

One strength of traditional methods of assessing writing, such as the NAEP writing assessment, is that they provide a standard means for comparing students' performance. By administering a common prompt or set of activities to students under standardized conditions, and by applying a standard set of evaluative criteria, these assessment methods ensure that all students have the same amount of time to respond to the same tasks and are given the same directions and information about the topic. In addition, the prompts and scoring guides are designed to minimize the effect students' specialized background knowledge might have on their performance, in order to ensure fairness to all students.

Because they offer a standard, systematic means for assessing writing, traditional methods of writing assessment are especially useful for comparing groups of students' writing performance beyond the classroom level. Through their day-to-day work with students, classroom teachers have detailed knowledge of students' abilities and achievements. They do not need a standard means for comparing students within their classrooms because they observe and evaluate their students' performance, formally or informally, every day. However, as soon as a teacher or school wants to compare the achievements of students from one classroom with those of another, the need for a standard method of assessment arises. While using a common writing

prompt, a fixed period of time, and a specific method for scoring students' writing may differ from students' usual school-based writing experiences, these controls provide a standard means for comparing students' writing beyond the classroom.

A major concern about using school-based writing samples to assess students' performance for school, district, state, or national assessment purposes is that it is difficult to create the controls necessary to ensure a fair and valid basis of comparison. The papers that students select to place in their portfolios are so varied and result from such a great diversity of classroom experiences that the question arises, are these papers truly comparable?

This pilot study provides an excellent example of this difficulty. For the purposes of this study, we classified the papers submitted into the three broad categories of narrative, informative, and persuasive writing. In order to develop scoring guides that could be applied to all of the papers in each category, we then assumed that the specific assignments teachers had given or activities they had designed were consistent with broader narrative, informative, or persuasive goals. The scoring guides were then designed to represent these more general, domain-specific goals.

The scoring systems designed for this study did not take into account the degree to which a paper fulfilled the assignment for which it was written. For example, it could be argued that, as part of an ongoing writing curriculum, a teacher might first focus students' attention on presenting lists of information about a common topic. The students who submitted papers resulting from this activity could only receive a score of 2 *(Attempted Discussion)* under our scoring system, even though their papers completely satisfied the activities that generated them.

On the other hand, students who submitted more elaborated reports could receive higher scores, even if their papers did not completely fulfill the assignments for which they were written. Thus, the scores assigned to papers in this study reflect the types and quality of instructional activities that generated them, as well as the writing achievement of the students. In other words, portfolio assessments provide a measure of the effectiveness of both teachers and students.

Authorship Can a classroom-based assessment system be developed that specifies and guarantees the authorship of papers submitted?

Traditional methods of writing assessment, because their administration procedures are standardized, ensure that the student being tested is the author of the writing submitted. In a high-stakes assessment environment, this question of authorship becomes a major issue. For example, states that

require students to pass a writing exam before graduating from high school (i.e., Louisiana, New York) employ standard procedures for collecting students' writing in order to ensure that the papers by which the students' abilities are being judged are truly the students' own work. It is difficult to ensure authorship when collecting classroom-based writing samples from students.

In addition, one of the strengths of using classroom-based writing to assess students' achievements is that this writing is the result of the use of writing process strategies. A key component of the process approach to writing instruction is the use of peer review and consultations with the teacher to assist students in revising their texts. This discussion of work with other students, friends, and family members provides the oral component of language use considered important to the development of good writing. However, this causes a problem when, under a classroom-based assessment program, one student submits papers that were the result of a group effort or a process that involved peer and teacher reviews and another student submits papers that received no reviews or assistance. Does their writing represent comparable efforts? Is it fair to compare the pieces they have submitted?

Coverage Can portfolio assessment methods cover the broad range of writing tasks required by most assessment frameworks?

Using a less structured approach to portfolio assessment, such as the one employed in this study, poses several problems for an assessment program. A central goal of many assessment programs is to measure a range of students' writing abilities. Most writing experts and educators maintain that this involves having students write in a variety of domains (i.e., informative, narrative, persuasive), using a variety of sources of information (i.e., information presented in the prompt, personal experiences), and using a variety of forms of writing (i.e., letters, essays, stories). Assessment programs that meet this goal have students perform a variety of writing tasks especially designed to cover a range of writing abilities.

Portfolio assessment programs that are designed to minimize the degree to which the assessment intrudes upon the instruction, while providing rich contextual information about students' writing, does not provide assessment coverage. Unless teachers and students were given very specific information about the types of pieces to include in a portfolio, it would be difficult to obtain the coverage necessary to meet the assessment goal of measuring a range of writing abilities. For example, in this study we asked teachers and students to select a variety of types of writing to include, yet we received very few papers that were not classified as either informative or narrative. Also, few of the papers were written to other than a general audience.

One solution would be to actually specify the writing activities teachers used to generate writing pieces for inclusion in students' portfolios. However, many large scale assessment programs are not in a position to specify actual writing activities for teachers to use as part of a portfolio assessment program. For example, NAEP assessments are specifically designed to monitor the results of instruction, not to provide instruction. Yet, for some states and school districts, providing exemplar instructional activities from which portfolio writing samples are selected may be possible. In lieu of actually specifying instructional activities, the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study design includes directions to students and teachers that emphasize more strongly the need for entries that represent a range of types of writing. It will be interesting to see, with the more specific directions and the request for more pieces of writing, whether a wider range of types of writing is submitted in 1992.

Relevancy Can a method for conducting a large-scale portfolio system be developed that allows for some standardization while maximizing its relevancy to instruction?

The main strength of school-based methods of writing assessment is that the information they provide is highly relevant to instruction. Because the writing sampled is a result of classroom writing activities, the information gained about the students' strengths and weaknesses relates directly to the instructional goals of their classes.

Writing is such a complex process involving many stages that it is very difficult, if not impossible, in a traditional, standardized setting to obtain measures that encompass many of the larger goals of writing instruction, such as peer review, use of references, and thorough use of revision processes. NAEP employs committees of educators and teachers to establish the goals for its writing assessments and to design the specific prompts that comprise the assessments, so that, as much as possible, the assessment will reflect current instructional practices. However, the need for standardized prompts, administration procedures, and scoring procedures necessarily distances traditional methods of writing assessment from the classroom.

The tension between the needs of assessment for standardization and the needs of instruction for individuality creates difficulties for programs that employ classroom-based writing to assess students' achievements. Some educators avoid all forms of portfolio assessment, maintaining that the writing portfolio is an instructional tool, not an assessment system. They are concerned that the diversity and individuality, which are the strengths of portfolios, will be lost when portfolios are used for assessment purposes beyond the classroom. Because there is a danger that the standardization necessary for large-scale, high-stakes assessment programs could result in a formulaic use of portfolios, some educators are recommending that portfolios be adapted

for assessment purposes only at the classroom or school level, rather than at the district or the state level.

Summary

The use of classroom-based writing samples to assess students' writing achievement has certain strengths and weaknesses that might influence a school, district, or state's decision about the selection or development of large-scale portfolio assessment programs.

Quality of Writing Samples First, because the time limits imposed under standardized testing conditions are eliminated when classroom-based writing is used, there are no limits to the writing students are able to submit. Although in this study we did not often see the use of process strategies, the writing submitted under a classroom-based assessment system can be the result of complex writing processes, involving multiple revisions, the use of reference sources, as well as the use of peer conferencing and consultations with teachers.

One result of using collection procedures that impose no time limits on students is longer and more developed texts. In this study, students' papers were much longer than the typical papers written under timed assessment conditions. In addition, their papers were more developed than those written under timed conditions. The evaluation criteria developed in this pilot study were designed to accommodate this higher range of writing.

For example, a typical 25-minute NAEP prompt that asks students to discuss a topic and provide details supporting their discussion would assign a score of a four or five if a paper addressed the topic and included several details elaborating on the topic. For a paper to receive a 4 or 5 under the informative scoring guide developed in this study, it would have to not only include multiple details, but relate these details in some fashion that represented more in-depth thinking and sophisticated development of the topic being discussed.

Likewise, a NAEP prompt that asks students to write a story in 25 minutes would assign a score of a 4 or 5 to a story that was clear and had multiple episodes. In order to receive a score of a 4 or 5 under the narrative portfolio scoring guide, most of the episodes of the story would have to be developed in some detail.

Thus, compared to writing produced under timed, standardized conditions, school-based writing yields a longer, more developed sample of students' work and this work is more reflective of the processes they normally engage in when they write for school.

Choice of Writing Samples In addition, giving students and teachers choice about what writing sample to include in a portfolio allows them to select the best from among each student's efforts. Having students reread and reflect upon their work engages students in evaluation processes that are considered to be essential to their development as writers.

The factor of choice also makes this method of assessment sensitive to differences in instructional programs. For example, as part of a writing instruction program a teacher may have focused students' attention on narrative writing. If given a traditional writing assessment, these students may be asked to write a persuasive letter and an informative essay. While their responses to these prompts will reflect certain aspects of their writing achievements, they are not reflective of the kinds of writing they have focused on in class. Having students and teachers select best examples of students' writing enables them to select pieces that relate directly to what students have been learning.

Dependency on Instruction While one of the strengths of classroom-based writing is its connection to classroom instruction, from an assessment point of view, this connection also is a potential weakness. Because writing ability is considered to be a combination of a variety of skills, knowledge, and strategies, most measures of students' writing achievement attempt to assess a range of writing performance. Traditional writing assessments include prompts that have students write to a variety of audiences, for a variety of purposes, in response to a range of stimuli. As was mentioned earlier, the NAEP writing assessment framework calls for narrative, informative, and persuasive prompts that ask students to write to a range of audiences (i.e., their peers, teachers, politicians, newspapers) and include a range of stimuli (i.e., pictures, poetry, advertisements, or brief magazine articles).

Portfolio assessment programs that use classroom-based writing samples have the potential for presenting a range of writing, but only if the writing programs in which students engage involve them in a broad range of writing activities. Unless students and teachers are directed to include specific kinds of writing in the portfolio, having them select the pieces to be included in assessment portfolios (the method used in this study, and which will be used in the 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study) can result in a collection of writing that is limited in range.

To guarantee that a wide range of writing samples is collected in a portfolio, one would need to give teachers specific assignments or very detailed guidelines about what is to be included. This approach poses problems for organizations such as NAEP, whose mission is to design assessments that reflect the goals of current writing instruction and assess the impact of instruction on

students' achievement, not to directly influence instruction by providing specific classroom activities.

Measure of Instruction A second consideration of using portfolios to assess students' achievements also stems from the element of choice. Under the collection system employed by NAEP in this study (and in the 1992 study), individuals decide what samples to submit in their portfolios. This results in a wide variety of writing being submitted. If the writing is assessed on a common scale, specific to the domain of the writing, then the assessment may be as much a measure of the classroom activities and amount of time spent on writing instruction as of the students' achievements.

When the assessment is located in the classroom or school, this factor does not pose a problem because the teacher can provide the contextual information about students' abilities and writing instruction to the concerned audience (i.e., other teachers, school administrators, parents). However, when the assessment involves students from across a district, a state, or the nation, the need for efficiency in handling large amounts of information and the need to apply a standard scoring system to students' writing precludes the use of rich contextual information. The differences in students' work may be partially a result of the writing activities in which they engaged, the amount of time they had to produce the writing, and the curricular goals of the school in which they study. Yet, in large-scale assessment programs, they are judged on a common scale. Students attending schools that emphasize writing have an advantage over those who do not when taking any kind of writing assessment. However, this advantage is increased when the method for collecting samples of students' writing is rooted in the classroom.

To conclude, the use of classroom-based writing or writing portfolio systems for assessment enables us to assess writing in a way that is highly relevant to instruction. The length and quality of the writing submitted by students enables us to develop and articulate higher standards for student writing. It also engages students and teachers in evaluative processes that support the goals of the writing curriculum, ensuring that the assessment is an integral, meaningful part of the instructional program.

At the same time, caution must be advised if the assessment results go beyond the classroom or school level. If used to assess students at the district, state, or national level (or for any "high stakes" purpose, such as promotion or graduation requirements), portfolio collection systems need to include ways of ensuring authorship and comparability of performance. This is especially true when participating teachers cannot be part of the assessment program development team and/or are unable to provide contextual information about instructional practices that would assist the assessors in making the comparisons across students that are central to large-scale assessments.

Over the past 30 years, our understanding of what it means to be a good writer and how one becomes a good writer has expanded to include a variety of intellectual, communicative, and social processes. It seems natural, and necessary, that our methods for judging students' writing also expand to include a variety of assessment modes. From its regular, timed writing assessment, NAEP gains information about students' writing achievements on a broad range of tasks. From its special portfolio study NAEP learns information about students' classroom experiences and school-based writing that provides a context for understanding students' overall achievements. As the various methods for collecting classroom-based writing for assessment purposes are refined, using both portfolio and traditional modes of assessment in concert may provide educators with rich, detailed portraits of students' writing abilities.

4

Samples of Students' Writing

PART 1: Narrative Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of stories submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated (see Chapter Two for the complete scoring guide). Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Event Description The two papers below are examples of Event Descriptions. They describe a single happening, rather than a series of events. The second paper describes the setting of the story in some detail, yet only tells about one action or event. Therefore, it was classified as an Event Description.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

One day there was a cat called Tom and a rat called Jerry they was a bad cat and rat the fight all the time they was a bad cat and rat the rat was picking on Tom the cat and rat all the time pick on each other the end

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

If I had a machinat that I would go to see the dinosaurs to see what they look like in real life I would take Matt with me and look for dinosaurs.

2: Undeveloped Story The four papers below are examples of Undeveloped Stories. These stories are a series of events, but the events, as well as the setting and characters, are only briefly described. These stories are similar to front-page newspaper reports, where the basic facts of a story are reported (who, what, when, where) but few details are presented about why events happened.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Oneday I feel asleep at school,
and I had a dream,
Clint and Brett were in it
Schula and Krissa were there,
And a ball was coming up,
and boys went with girls,
Clint went with schula and Krissa
went with Brett And they danced
the night away, And Got married,
And lived happild ever after.
And I woke up.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Shark's Cove

One hot summer, a guy named Joe was walking with three people. Their names were Steven,Mike,and Terrence. They were good friends.They walked to a cove. Terrence went down for water. All of a sudden Mike bumped Terrence and he fell into the cove. Steven was laughing,Joe turned around in time to see the big dorsal fin. He said to Terrence,"Get out of the water!" Terrance turned around and saw a BIG shark. he swam to the edge of the cove,and he yelled,"HELP!" Steven and Mike yelled,"Come on! Come on!" then all of a sudden the shark bit him.

From this day on, Terrence has two marks from the shark.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

Ring ring ring. "Hello! This is Donald Duck, is Freddy there."

"No! This is Jessica Pausits. Who is Freddy?"

"You know Freddy, Freddy Couzer?

You mean that famous star."

"Yes! I do!"

"How do you know him."

"Well, we go way back, when we were in school we were best friends, and still are."

"Could you get me his autograph + send it to me?"

"Why of course, well, I have to go now ok."

"Ok by."

"Ya! by."

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3: Basic Story The four papers below are examples of Basic Stories. In these stories, the writers describe a series of events and go beyond a simple list of related events. Some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or the setting) are somewhat developed. However, these stories lack a sense of cohesion and completeness. They may have problems with syntax or sequencing of events.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

One time I was walking down to our house. When I decided to take a short cut. So I went down Ball park Rd. passed the softball field and cut through the dark gloomy woods. And passed the Blanchette's red barn. I was past David Razcek house and there before me stood a spooky wrecked house that I had never seen. The address was 200 and there was no last name. The Lane was Dan Lane. I decided to leave the Old squeaky house. A few days later I got one letter from that Old wrecked house. It said, "Be here a 6:00 p.m. Sharp!" I was thinking it over when I thought, "What if it's the monster family with Freddy Crougar, Jason, and the Texas Chainsaw man." So I said to my self, "What the heck I might as well see what they're like." So I started off they weren't far because they were our next door neighbors. I went up and knocked on the door. A big man that looked like Jason answered the door and pulled me inside. I saw two miniature Freddy Crougar. Jason pulled me in and sat me down on an old damp dusty chair and he took off his shiny mask. I covered my face with my hands soon after I looked out it was a regular man then I remembered it was Halloween.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

The Alive Golfball

One day I was out playing golf in my yard. I put my favorite golfball down and was about ready to put it when, it got up and ran away! I ran into my house went to my privite phone in my room. Then I called my friends and told them about what happened they didn't believe me. After supper I decided to go look for my golfball. I got a small flashlight and went into the forest near our house. I have been looking for it and nothing yet. It was getting dark. I was glad that I packed a small flashlight. A couple of hours later I gave up I went back to my house I went into my room. There on one of my pillows was my favorite golfball. It talked to me. I asked it why it ran away. "It was cold outside and it is really cold when your're flying throu the air!" The I shall use you as my summer golfball!

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Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

Millionaire

One dark and stormy night. I saw Freddy Krugar. I Thought ~~I~~ Do anyway. It was really my rich uncle Bob Martinie.

I said; "what ~~the~~ in the lords name are you doing in Ottorville?" He said,
"I came to give you a million dollars!"

So I got it and left it in the Ottorville Bank, for 10 years I ended up with $2 million I put half in Walmart Stock for 5 years I got $3 million more. So in 10 years. I had $6 million more.

Im 37 now I stayed in Walmart stock for 15 more years and now have 20 million.

So I quit and retired to Las Vegas After 5 years of gambling, I lost Everything and am now homeless.

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

SOAP

Once upon a time I saw this big UFO landing right in firont of me. THEY took me around the world for 3 days. THE Aliens in the UFO looked veery weird. THE world looks like a big round circle it looked very impessive. I told some of the Aliens to take me to Europe and they did it was so beautiful and huge. I also told them to take me to New York it looked so big. We also saw a hurricane it looked soeed of scarey but it was so big that it was like a million UFO's put togother. As days went by I was getting depressed. I've seen ~~eee~~ enough, the clouds wheee big, white, and veey puffy. THE ALiens brought me home and ~~@~~ told my friends all about the adventure. But some did not believed me.

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4: Extended Story The four papers below are examples of Extended Stories. In these papers, many of the events are somewhat elaborated, giving the sense of a sequence of distinct story episodes. Details are given about the setting, the characters' goals, problems to be solved, and the key events. Yet, these stories are confusing or incomplete. The characters' goals may be left unresolved, the problem posed in the story's opening never solved. The ending may not match the beginning or the story's ending may be inconsistent with the internal logic established throughout the rest of the story.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

How Storms Came To Be

Once there was a married couple expecting their first child. They had been married for 3 years. The wife's name was Michele and the husbands name was George.

Now one night Michele had a dream about George killing the baby and herself. George had red eyes in the dream and after killing the baby he cut its hand off. When Michele woke up there was a hand on the floor. She wept.

As she wept she started lifting in the air. and so did the hand but it became alive and grew in to a baby which she raised in heaven. There she asked a god what happened to George.

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The god answered, "watch."
She saw George killing a baby just like her dream. She wept and the baby cried and the lights went crazy, but a fuse went lose and electricity hit a tear. The tear fell to earth followed by many other tears and electricity fell, and killed George. The baby screamed as each electric bolt fell and there was the first storm. Now any time something cruel happens there's a storm.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

THE MAGIC RING

When Sam was polishing the fake ring that he had bought from the flea market the outer layer came off. He stared at it seeing the reflection from the sun shining on it, and a star appeared in the middle. He was so shocked; he fainted. A crowd of people surrounded him, looking at the ring and him. One person got a bucket of water and threw it on Sam's face. Sam started struggling to sit up. He looked at his ring and felt the star in the middle. He thought of a starfish and right next to him appeared a tank of starfish. In amazement the people started shouting about the starfish. One man suggested that Sam think of something else. So, Sam thought of some chocolate ice cream bars, and before he could say a word the ice cream bars were there. Bars and bars of chocolate ice cream were all around him on the ground.

Sam started walking home and thought about what a long walk it was. He touched the star and thought of a backpack jet and suddenly he was wearing one. He flew away in a matter of seconds and arrived home.

Sam went into his house and told his mom all about the magic ring. His mom wanted to try it to see if he was telling the truth. She thought of 100 dollar bills and said she would give them to the poor if the ring produced them. She touched the star on the ring, she thought hard, and on the table appeared stacks and stacks of 100 dollar bills. Then Sam's mother went to the bank and deposited a huge college fund for Sam. She told Sam he could use the ring when he was old enough to use it wisely. Sam's mother put it away for 10 years, and then Sam finally got to use it.

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Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

THE MOUSE AND His ADVENGERS

One day a white and brown mouse came into Edgemere school he was wondering around the school classes trying to find a home. While he was walking he heard a noise he looked behind him but nothing was there, he started walking a little faster then faster then fast. and then he started running while he was running he stumbled into a cacarock carrying a hand full of food and crums. When they looked at each aother they yeled cacarock ochi hey dude how have you been? I live bein serching for a place to live. come to my place I have all kinds of junk there. Come on follow me Ok? Ahh here it is Odie ~~that~~ are my friends junk rosin and scratch hey how are doing?

The next morning my friends and me came in to cacaroches home I didnt know what was living in my crate when it got out a book I saw the mouse I didnt yell like most girls

do. I pick it up I put it on my desk and it started talking to me. Then as the month passed we became best friends he was giving me the answers for every test. But when the days passed Odie's peranto found him and took him home.

The End

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

One day the Leslie Family went to West Inda. They had to parsute out of the plane wich was quite difficlet for their German shepherd so he was strped to their youngest boy because he did not way very much.

a strong wind came up and sepried them the young boy who's name was Brandon went further than the others got lost. Fido his dog was with Brandon when Brandon was caught in a tree. Brandon cut his self free [illegible] his survaval knife. He got out his compass he found out it was broke so he and Fido started walking They walked until it got dark Brandon got out some Beef Jerky and sat down. Brandon remded he had matches so he built a fire and loaded it down with leaves so it would make lots of smoke. The next morning Brandon ran down to a stream and took a bath then Brandon and Fido went the same way they had flown in. Two days later Brandon and Fido were running out of food so Brandon took out a disasembled 12 gauge he [illegible] and cut of some of the skin off.

fido caught the smell of a quail and [illegible] Brandon shot it.
two weeks later Brandon found his family by a large river!

The end

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5: Developed Story The four samples below illustrate the Developed Story. These papers describe a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements are somewhat elaborated. Yet, some aspect of these stories is not well developed, such as the ending or a crucial event.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

The Adventure

The last thing I remember ~~was~~ is the ship sinking into the murky waters of the Atlantic. But now there was nothing. No boat, no one except me and some strange place that looked like an island.

As I dragged my cold and tired body to shore, I became frightened. What if the island was inhabited by cannibals? What if this island was inhabited by some Satan worshipers? I could only dread what they would do to me. Then I caught hold of myself. There were no cannibals or Satan worshipers here. There was no sense in letting my imagination get away from me. There was only one thing here for sure, and that was me.

All of a sudden my left leg hit something hard. I reached down to pick it up. I could hardly believe my eyes! It was the flag to the ship, and it was still attached to the mast. I tried to drag it to shore but it was too heavy. I managed to rip the flag from the mast. It was the only remembrance that I had of my parents, for we were separated in the accident. The flag would make a good blanket for the night time too.

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Soon I reached shore, and I got out of the water. I figured the best way to dry off was to let the sun do it for me. I started to wall along the beach. I guess I had been walking for 45 minutes or so. It seemed like I had already gone all around the island, so I sat down to think. Where am I? Will I die? These questions were flowing through my head like crazy. I got back up and looked around me. But there was nothing except water and trees. I decided to go for the trees.

I entered the forest and could no longer hear the sound of the ocean. This was a scary place to be. I walked deeper and deeper into the forest where I spotted some berry bushes. I almost lost my head and ate a whole hand full. Just then I remembered a trick I learned in girl scouts. You take the berry and put it on your bottom lip and after a few minutes if it does not sting, leave a rash, or itch it's okay to eat. I did so and to my advantage the berry didn't do anything negative. I ate until I was stuffed. Then feeling tired, I dozed off and fell into a deep sleep.

Suddenly I woke up. I wasn't in the woods any more. The surroundings looked like a hospital. Then the pain hit me right in the gut. I screamed in agony. One of the masked people pushing my cart looked down and then kissed me. The person said "It will be alright darling."

Mom? But what was she doing here? I thought she died on the ship.

"Mom, why am I here?"

"You ate some very poisonous berries," she said.

I passed out and that's all I remember until one day later.

I was sitting in a hospital bed with my two parents hovering over me. For the next few minutes my parents explained the whole thing to me. They had escaped the ship on a life boat. Then they told me how a young boy had walked out into his back yard and found me. As soon as he and his parents found out what I had eaten, they took me to the hospital where the police located my parents.

And to think I thought I had been on a deserted island, when I was really on Rhode Island off the coast of Maine. When I thought I had walked around the island, I had really walked only part of the coast line. Unfortunately this area was uninhabited.

When I got home I hung the flag on my bedroom wall as a reminder of my great adventure.

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Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

The Day of the Invisible Kid

"Chemistry 101...Chemistry 105...Chemistry 107. Oh here it is Organic Chemistry." SPLASH! a big jug hit me as I fell off the ladder. The jug's label read "INk." I couldn't read the rest because it was smeared away.

"What was that? Are you ok? What are you doing down here?" asked my dad.

"I'm just getting a chemistry book for my report."

"You shouldn't have procrastinated on this report! Now you'll have to get up extra early to do it. It's late; go to bed!"

"O.K. Dad."

The next morning I was up working on my report. My mom knocked on the door and came in. When she looked at my bed, her jaw dropped.

"Ken, come here! Erica? Erica, come here, wherever you are!"

"I'm right here mom."

No answer.

"What's going on here? Where is she?" my dad asked as he walked into my room. "Uh, she's not here." "I can't believe her running away from doing her report! Vicki, you go look downstairs; I'll look up here." My dad went from room to room calling my name and saying, "She's in big trouble. Erica? I can't understand her. Erica?"

Each time he said that I kept answering with "I'm right here. What are you talking about?" This was very absurd.

Meanwhile my mom called the police. "Hello, this is Vicki Oliver. I'd like to report a missing girl. Description? Well, she's about five-feet-four-inches tall, has brown hair, and green eyes. She's thirteen years old..."

While Mom did that I went back into my Dad's lab. Even though my Dad's a scientist, he acts pretty stupid sometimes. My mom is warm and carrying. She caes when something happens to a person, but my dad just gets mad.

I found the jug on the floor where I'd left it. Now the "INK" was gone from the label and the smudge of writing was gone too! Then it finally dawned on me. It was a bottle of disappearing ink! When it fell on me, it had made me invisible. Now all I had to do was get my dad's attention.

I went back upstairs and heard my parents yelling. "She's gone because of the report! That girl has got to learn not to procrastinate!"

"No, she's run away because you're always yelling at her!" my mom retorted.

"I'm never going to be the same. I'll be invisible forever." kept running through my mind.

I tried to get my mom's attention. I moved pillows, plants, turned on the t.v., and the lights. Finally, I took a washable marker and wrote on the wall: "I'm invisible. Your ink fell on me. Help me!"

Dad read it and laughed. He was sure I was hiding out at a friend's house.

Two hours went by and he still didn't believe me. I made up my mind to go to a magic store and get some reappearing cream.

I left my house at noon and walked about a block. I was fine, but really hungry. I walked a long time. By the time I reached main street, I thought that I would faint.

The cars would not stop for me because they couldn't see me. I went to the corner and pushed the walk button. When the light changed, I went. A guy in a red sports car ran the light and barely missed hitting me! I was glad when I finally reached the magic store.

When I went inside, I noticed there were a lot of customers. I went over to the shelf and got a bottle. Everyone was shocked to see a bottle in mid-air float to the back room. I opened the bottle, and rubbed the on the cream.

Five minutes later I was back to normal. I yelled, "It's a miracle!"

I walked out of the store, and made it home safely. I tip-toed up the stairs, and about half way up my dad caught me.

"It's about time you decided to come home to do that report!"

I laughed and ran up the stairs. I wworked on my report until my mom came in and threw her arms around me.

"Thank goodness you're home. I better call the police and let them know." She walked out without even asking me where I'd been.

Dad thinks I was at a friend's house; Mom thinks I ran away. I just let them believe that because they wouldn't understand. It's been two years, and they still don't know.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

"A little Girls Wish"

Once upon a time there was this little girl named Chrissy. Chrissy wasn't like other girls and boys. She was very, very, poor. She didn't have a Christmas tree for Christmas.

It was exactly two and a half weeks before Christmas. Every night before she went to bed she'd say "I wish I may I wish I might, I wish that my wish would come true tonight." Then she'd make a wish. Well for the past week she has been wishing for a Christmas tree, presents, and some food.

One morning she woke up and there was a Christmas tree. It was beautiful, she had thought to herself. It was green and the tips of the branches were frosted. It had silver garland and blue, and yellow balls. A very marvelous star on top. She looked around. She seen 3 stockings. There were three different names on each of the stockings. They read- Mike, on the biggest stocking, Angela, on the middle sized one, and Sarah but not

least Chrissy. She was very greatful with what she had now.

That night when she wished upon a star, she had also prayed to god and thanked him for everything he had done for her family. That night she had a dream about presents under the tree, and lights on the tree. She was dreaming about Christmas, when she got woke up by the sound of voices. She went to the stairs and looked down, to see a faded girl, decorating her tree with lights.

She woke up at 7:30 A.M. At first she thought wow, what an outstanding dream I had. She quickly remembered the little ghostly girl putting up the lights. So she went downstairs to find lights on the tree and decorations around her windows. She thought that the girl was just in her dreams. She wished she could tell her mom, ... but her mom was dead. She wanted to tell her dad, but she didn't think he would believe here, because she was thirteen years old.

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That night she didn't sleep because she was thinking about the girl. So since she couldn't sleep she went to her sisters room. She told her sister Azaria about what she had thought was a dream. Her sister had asked Chrissy what the little girl looked like. She told her that she had brown hair, shining, bright, blue eyes and was wearing a long ankel length red dress. Her sister pulled out a picture that looked like, what her sister had described. Azaria said "Is this what the young girl looked like?" Chrissy nodded her head. Azaria said "This is mom when she was twelve."

Now Chrissy was scared. Then she was happy. She was scared because she was confused. She was happy because she thought her mother was coming back alive. She thought how wonderful it would be if her mother was alive, But she was plenty scared, because her mom had been dead for four years.

Well she finally fell asleep, she dreamt about her little ~~ge~~ ghostly girl again. Only it

was the night before christmas. She had dreamt that there was presents and fabulous food for her sick father, sister, and herself.

When she woke up she went directly downstairs to her living room. She saw presents, food, and her stockings were even filled. She thought this was the best christmas she had ever had. She had also thought it was the most special christmas, because she learned that her mother was really there for her, whenever she needed her.

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

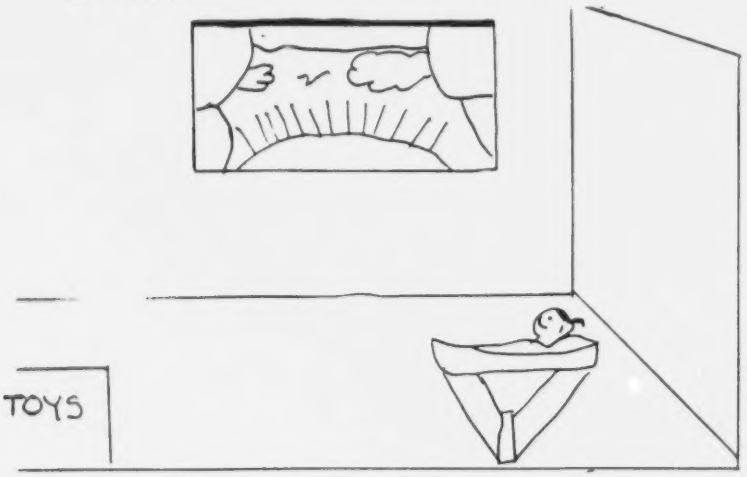
A ModernDay Fairy Tale

KERRI WHITE
A Modern-day Fairytale

By

One day in a faraway place, a lovely lady sat in front of a window sewing. As she was working, she pricked her finger, and one drop of blood fell in the sunlight.

"How happy I would be if I had a little girl with red lips as red as blood, skin as tan as tan could be, and hair as black as charcoal," thought the lady as she sewed.



When summer came, her wish was granted. A little daughter was born to the lady and her husband. They named her Kerri after her great-grandmother who, when she was young, was the most beautiful woman in the town.

After a few days, the lady died and eventually the man married again. The new wife was beautiful, but she was cruel and she was jealous of all the beautiful women in the land. Kerri's step-mother was extremely jealous of her.

The step-mother's most prized possession was her T.V. She used to look at the T.V. and say, "T.V., T.V. on the floor, who is the coolest of us all?"

The T.V. always replied, "You are."

One day the T.V. said, "Why do you ask me the same question every day? Why don't you ask me something like who is going to win the Super Bowl?"

The step-mother didn't think that was funny. The next day she asked again, "Who is the coolest of them all?"

The T.V. said,"Don Johnson." After a long pause, it added, "I'm just kidding."

So the next day the step-mother asked again and the T.V. replied, "Kerri White." The step-mother knew the T.V. wasn't joking this time - and this made her mad, even though she knew Kerri was beautiful and wore really cool clothes.

The step-mother said, "I'll have to do something drastic to her, but after I get my hair done." So the step-mother got her hair done and after that she told the chauffer to take Kerri out in the woods and shoot her.

The Chauffer drove Kerri out into the woods to shoot her. Kerri said, "What are we doing her?"

The chauffer replied by saying, "I'm going to kill you!" Little did the chauffer know that Kerri knew karate, so Kerri did a flying drop kick right in his face. He went flying into the tree and was knocked out.

Kerri drove the car to the airport and took the first plane. It was going to Miami. When she got there, all she could do was walk the streets. That's how she met Don Johnson.

Don Johnson was flying by the mall in his Ferrari. He spotted Kerri coming out of Macy's Department store. Since she was so beautiful, he stopped right at her feet.

"Need a lift?" asked Don.

Kerri said, "Who are you?"

Don said, "Haven't you seen me on T.V.?"

Kerri said, "Oh, I know who you are. You're that person who sells air fresheners!"

Don Johnson introduced himself and said, "Come one, get in. You're too beautiful to be left here!"

Don took her to the police station and introduced her to all his friends.

Then he took her home to stay with him. He warned her not to buy anything from door to door sales people.

After a few days, the step-mother found out where Kerri was staying. The step-mother mother dressed up like a Girl Scout leader and went to the house to sell cookies. She had put poison on some of the cookies. She knocked on the door.

Kerri answered, "Who is it?"

The step-mother said, "It's only a Girl Scout leader who is selling cookies."

So Kerri opened the door and the lady said, "Would you like some?"

Kerri asked, "Do they have almonds in them?"

The step-mother said, "Yes, they sure do, and they taste good, too" as she popped one in her mouth and began munching away. She had accidentally eaten one of the poisoned cookies and she fell to the floor, not moving. Kerri called some of the policemen to help her, but by the time they had arrived the step-mother used her magic powers to make herself come back to life, and had escaped by way of the back door.

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When Don Johnson got home, he said, "I just remembered I forgot to say something this morning!"

Kerri said, "What did you forget to say?"

Don answered by saying, "I say it every morning before I go to work. I say, I'm rich, I'm rich, it's off to work I go. I own a pool, I own a boat, I'm rich, I'm rich."

"You also forgot to tell me there was an alligator in your swimming pool! It startled me when I was trying.to get a suntan. He just popped up out of the water."

The next day the step-mother came again, dressed as an Avon Lady. She knocked on the door.

Kerri said, "Who is it?"

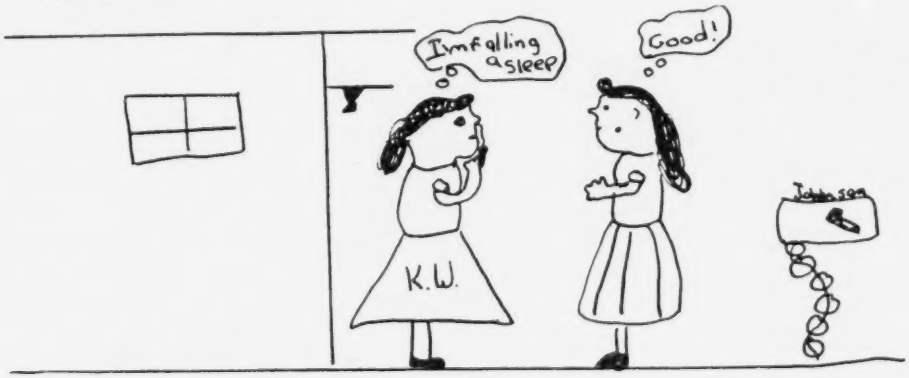
The lady said, "It's just an Avon Lady."

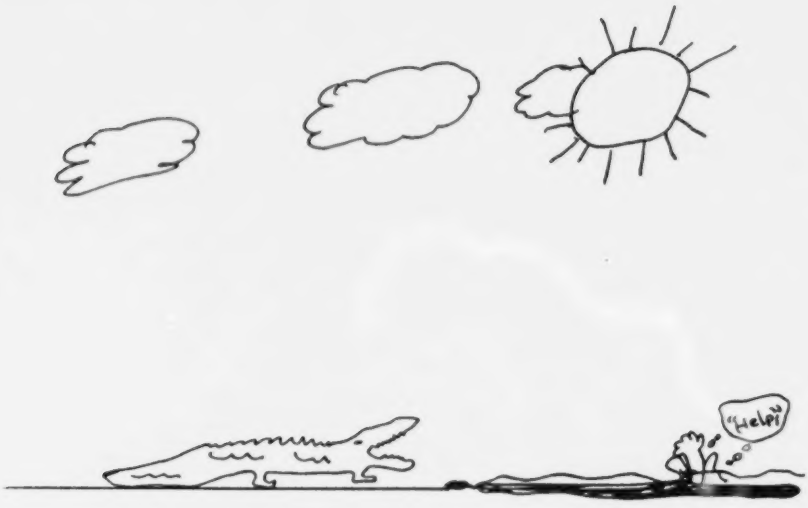
Kerri opened the door. This time the lady was selling perfume.

Kerri asked, "May I smell it?"

the lady said, "Sure."

Kerri took one whiff of the perfume and fell to the floor because the perfume was poisoned. In her hurry to get away, the step-mother dropped her hand lotion and spilled it all over the floor.





Don arrived home a few seconds later and saw Kerri lying on the floor. He heard a noise and looked up in time to see the stepmother trying to escape from the condo, by walking quietly out the back door. She slipped on her hand lotion and slid into the pool right on top of Don's alligator. That was the end of her.

Don leaned over to give Kerri a farewell kiss, and suddenly she opened her eyes.

Kerri and Don got married and drove off into the sunset in Don's Ferrari.

This book is dedicated to my whole family

to thank them for laughing in all the right places.

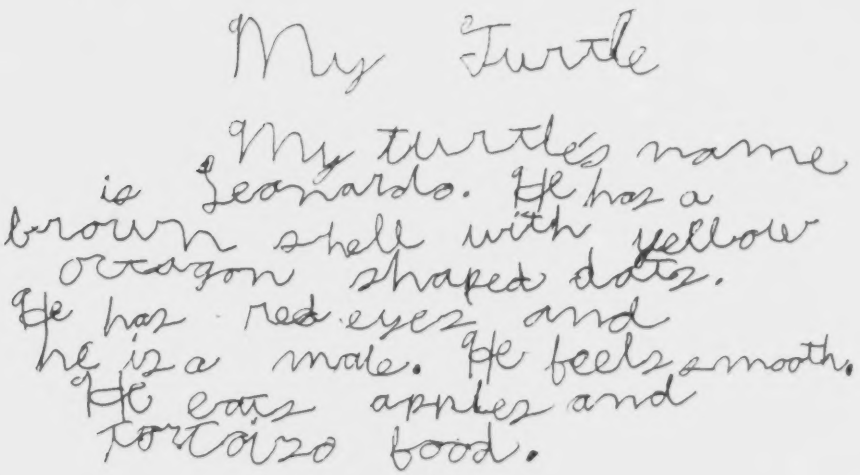
6: Elaborated Story No papers were considered to be Elaborated Stories. To be classified as elaborated, these stories had to present a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements were well developed. Goals or problems introduced in the beginning were well resolved by the end; characters' motives were well developed; and the entire story was a cohesive, unified whole.

PART 2: Informative Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of informative writing submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated (see Chapter Two for the complete scoring guide). Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Listing The two papers below are examples of Listing. The writers present pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic. These papers may also contain a range of information about the topics. However, no attempt is made to relate the ideas or information.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)


My Turtle

My turtles name is Leonardo. He has a brown shell with yellow octagon shaped dots. He has red eyes and he is a male. He feels smooth. He eats apples and tortoise food.

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Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Rocks And Minerals mark

① I like rocks because they are colorful. You can find them anywhere. Collecting is the first and most obvious activity for anyone interested in rocks and minerals. There are a few dozen kinds of rocks. Equipment can be simple. You need a pile of old newspapers for wrapping, a notebook and pencil, are all you need.

② You can collect rocks because it is fun. Sometimes you have to add water. Sometimes you have to add rocks. And sometimes you have to be cool. And some rocks are heavy.

③ Rocks are use for [illegible]. You can thrown rock.

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2: Attempted Discussion The four papers below are examples of Attempted Discussions. A range of information and/or ideas about a topic is presented in these papers. Also, in one part of each paper, some attempt is made to establish relationships between the pieces of information or ideas. However, these relationships are not clearly established. The ideas or information may be incomplete or undeveloped.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Woodchucks

A woodchuck's fur is brown on the top and red on belly. It has two layers of fur on it's body and is one to two feet long and weighs to thirtey pounds. The female woodchucks give birth to five young in the spring.

They go after corn, beets, celery, lettuce, cabbage and turnips. They eat a large amounts of food before they hibernate. When they're munching on some food, before they eat they sit up and see if any trouble is coming. Woodchuck's mate when they're done hebernating.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Did you know Brian likes Rickey Henderson? He also likes baseball, hockey, and football. He likes to collect baseball cards and likes eating tacos and pizza. I asked Brian who he liked, but he said no comment. He also admires a lot of baseball stars like Don Matingly, Rickey Henderson, Mark McGuire, and Jose Canseco. He likes the Bears, And his favorite movies are Nightmare on Elm Street, And Friday the Thirteenth.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

People / Dogs

There are similarities and differences between people and dogs. One way they are similar is that they both can walk. Furthermore, both are mammals. They also both have noses and parents. Finally, both have hair.

One difference is dogs have four legs whereas people have two. In addition, they have tails. However, we do not. We have short noses, but they have long noses. Finally, dogs don't talk whereas people do.

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

What's it like Camping at Pleasant Hill Campground

When we first go to Pleasant Hill Campground. I went to the game room they have air HocKey, HocKey, Dig Dug, Jud Box and other games. I went there everyday.

There was alot of campers there All my friends had campers. There names are Jason, Jaime, Nancy, Dan, Shannon, and Beth they all have Campers.

There were alot of differnt tents and they were differnt Shapes and Sizes plus differnt Colors.

There were alot of kids all ages every day there would be new kids they all are nice. The first day I got there I met two people Shannon, and Nancy

There is a Store there everything cost alot but you can get anything you wont forget the place.

There is a pool 3 feet

the only way you can get in the pool is if you are 14 or older, if you are younger you well have to have someone 14 or older to watch you.

-Please come and visit because you well have a good time

3: Undeveloped Discussion The four papers below are examples of Undeveloped Discussions. These papers include a broad range of information about their topics. Relationships are somewhat established between the ideas and/or information, but not completely. The ideas may be confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

A Highspeed Chase

July 6, 1980 a burgundy Porshe and a greenish brown Cadillac had a highspeed chase on the freeway. They were trying to bump each other off the road. Then at high noon the Porshe ran up a tree and flipped over on it side. Immediately the Cadillac stopped; the driver got out and started to walk up the road. After he had walked about 2 miles a policeman got out of his car. He caught his car exactly 2 miles back down the road. He radioed for more men. Wen the other man started to run, the policeman couldn't catch him. Up to the day the case is still remembered by the man that got killed-who is Antonio Gillard from Windsor, Virginia. The man that killed Antonio is David Pilow from Sacremento, California. This chase was drug related. If you have any information on this case call this number 1-800-682-4009.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Shorty

Shorty is my dog. It is a beagle. It is a hunting dog and is also a house dog. It sleeps on my mom's bed. Once he had to have stitches because another dog bit him on the hip. It put one big hole in his right hip and now he has to be tied. The reason the other dog bit him was because a female dog was in season.

The first day we had him he went in the bathroom on my brother's foot. Shorty was mad at him. We got him the night before. He was only a puppy then. As he grew up he finally got housebroken.

Our cat drink out of the fish bowl so after a while he started to drink from the fish bowl too. It eats cat food instead of dog food.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

7th Grade

November 17, 1989

"My favorite Hobbies"

My favorite hobbies are playing basketball, singing and skating. I also like to do many athletic sports. In basketball I like to make shots as well as checking people. Most of the time I foul people, but that's me on the courts.

In singing I have a high ranged voice, I am soprano. My favorite song is "Imagine" by Tracie Spencer. When I'm older, I plan my career as a singer. I want to aspire many people, and I want to start when I'm sixteen and tour the world..

For skating, I can do many twists and turns, but don't dare catch me when I've have fallen, neither laugh. Skating is a challenge to me as well as many other people.

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

Summer/Winter

Summer and Winter are alike in some ways. One way is that summer has activities what may also occur in winter. These include swinging, running, playing football and riding bikes. Basketball maybe played in both seasons also.

Summer and winter are also different. In winter activities. sledding, snowball fighting whereas these can't be done in the summer time. In the summer there is swimming whereas in winter there is none. In the summer time school has been let out and a vacation may occur. However, in the winter time it just about the middle of the school year.

finally summer is hot and winter is usually cold. That is what I think of these two seasons summer and winter.

4: Discussion The four papers below are examples of Discussions. In these papers, a broad range of information and/or ideas is presented. In at least one section, the writers use rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, definition, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking by importance, exemplification) to clearly relate the information and ideas.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Henry Bradley plant was born on October 27 1819. I came to florda in 1853 Because of my wife's health. I became Manager for the adams Express Company. during the civil war my service to the Confederacy were so valuable that I was excuse from the Prohebition against Northerners remaining in the South. after the civil war I put to together what was know as the plant system. this was railroad going from jacksonville to Palatka sandford and tampa. I also added steamships to my intereests. I was named the father of tampa bcase I built tampa bay Hotel. developed a deepwater terminal at port tampa and generally stimulated the growth of the Community. I once had

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a business partner Henry M. flagler
and biographer Charles E. Harner.
but me and Andry completed up
and he built on the east cost
and built on tampa bay.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Trip to Saturn

When I went to Saturn, I could see rings around the planet. Like sheep dogs, "shepherd moons" herd the particles in some of the rings. The gravity of each of these shepherd moons holds the ring particles in place. Voyager spacecraft discovered two tiny shepherd moons orbiting on one of Saturn's rings.

Saturn has 17 moons. That is more than any other planet. Some are Hyperion, Enceladus, and Titan.

Hyperion is icy and looks like a potato. Objects that crash into Hyperion broke off chunks of the moon.

Enceladus is icy too, but shaped more like a giant snowball. Some scientists think that liquid from inside

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the moon may escape through cracks in the surface and cover the moon with new ice.

Titan is one of few moons in the solar system known to have an atmosphere. Organic compounds give Titan it's orange color.

Then my time ran out, but I learned alot and had a great trip.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

Per. 1

"My Brother"

I have a brother his name is Heath, he is eight years old. Heath has light brown hair, giant brown eyes, wears nbron glasses with a little neon yellow band that goes around them. He is about 5 foot tall, very skinny, and very strong for his age.

Interview On Paul Revere "Paul, now that the Revolutionary War is over, could you please answer acouple of questions for me?" "Yes, I'd be happy to."

"I'd like to know what your profession was before the war?"

"Back in Boston I was a silversmith."

"Since you mentioned Boston did you have anything to do with the Boston Tea Party?"

"Yes, myself and a group of patriots had taken part in the Boston Tea Party."

"Paul, what was the pourpose of the Boston Tea Party?"

"It was a warning that the colonists would refuse to pay taxes unless they had some share in their own government."

"Paul, what was the midnight ride all about, and what role did you play in it?"

"The midnight ride was soposed to inform the minutemen hey march by land or go by water. I had to wait night er night for a signal saying weather to march by land or go by water, then I would ride by horse spreading the news."

"I thank you for speanding your time here to talk to me." "Your welcome, I enjoyed being here talking to you."

Interveiw by:

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was written by Robert Louis Stevenson. This science fiction story was one of Stevenson's best. The story begins on a regular Sunday morning in London, England.

It begins with two men taking their annual stroll down the street. One of the men, Mr. Richard Enfield recalls an [illegible] That happened to him a long [illegible] He begins to share this event with his walking partner, who happened to be his cousin, Mr. Gabriel John Utterson. Then the story begins to unfold! He tells of his strange meetings with Mr. Hyde and of the many strange disappearances and sicknesses of Dr. Jekyll. The most exciting part of the book to me was when Mr. Enfield discovers that Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are one!

Dr. Jekyll, later known to others as the man who died twice, soon became sick and often excluded himself from others. Eventually Dr. Jekyll becomes unable to

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contrd his experiment with Mr. Hyde. He
awakes one morning to find that he has
transformed to Mr. Hyde overnight! Mr. Hyde
then becomes furious and burns all of Dr.
Jekyll's papers, otherwise his own, locks the
door to his house and breaks the key under
his heel. He placed his last Will and Testament
in the hands of his lawyer, Mr. Utterson. At
the end of his will he can feel death
approaching. He bids farewell to Mr. Utterson
and then ends his letter, along with his life.

I enjoyed this story thoroughly and would
recommend it to anyone who enjoys a
good science-fiction story. I believe there are
two sides to people as Jekyll implied. I also
believe that if one does not learn to control
both sides of himself that sometimes down the
long road of life it will catch up with him
and cause him great pain inside

5: Partially Developed Discussion The two papers below are examples of Partially Developed Discussions. These papers include a broad range of information. Information and relationships are established and well developed, with explanations and supporting details. The paragraphs tend to be unified and well formed. However, the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose, audience, and cohesion. The writers of these papers present a wide range of information on a topic, organize this information clearly, develop most of the aspects of this topic, yet do not place their discussion in context, within a wider communicative purpose.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Aerosol and the Ozone

Most people had never heard of ozone until a few years ago. Ozone is a region of the stratosphere located about 20 to 40 miles above the earth's surface. It shields the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiation.

There are scientists that believe our ozone layer is being destroyed by aerosal cans. There are fluorocarbons that are released into the earths atmosphere when aerosol cans are used.

When the fluorocarbons are broken up by ultraviolet rays from the sun, chlorine atoms are released into the atmosphere.

Other chemical substances in the atmosphere react with these chlorine atoms. This would cause a reduction in the ozone. If this occurs our earth would be exposed to increased amounts of harmful ultraviolet radiation. Because of this potential danger, the federal government in 1978 banned the use of most fluorocarbon aerosols.

Early in the earth's history there was no ozone shield and the surface of our planet was covered in ultraviolet radiation. This radiation was useful because it provided energy to begin the chemical processes that led to life.

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Through photosynthesis organisms produced oxygen for the earth's atmosphere which led to the formation of the ozone.

It was only at the beginning of the 1970's that the discovery was made that human activity could effect the ozone. The first threat was aircraft. Then nuclear weapons and the space shuttle were threats to the ozone. It wasn't until later that the discovery of aerosol cans hurting the ozone was realized. This spray can threat has created a lot of interest. Most of the researchers working on this problem were quite surprised at the concern people showed. Many people stopped buying aerosols and started

buying their products in roll-on or pump-spray containers. The shield that the ozone gives us from harmful solar radiation must be protected or our lives will be in great danger.

This solar radiation causes sunburn and destroys living cells. It is a cause of skin cancer. A 10% reduction in ozone would cause a 20 to 40% rise in skin cancer. The depletion of the ozone will also have an effect on plants, animals and the climate.

The fluorocarbons from aerosols are strong absorbers of the infrared radiation given off by the earth. Radiation is trapped and prevented from escaping into space. This will warm the lower atmosphere causing the greenhouse effect. That will cause drastic changes in our climate.

People need to stay concerned about the depletion of our ozone. As long as there are people who speak out against the use of aerosol cans, the people who make and use them will have to listen.

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New words I Learned

Aerosol: very fine particles of a substance suspended in the air or in some other gas.

Fluorocarbon: one of a group of compounds of fluorine and carbon, chemically stable used as solvents and lubricants.

Greenhouse Effect: absorption of the sun's infrared radiation in the earth's atmosphere, resulting in an increase in the temperature of the earth's surface.

Infrared: using electromagnetic radiation with wavelengths longer than those of visible light and shorter than those of microwaves.

Ozone layer: a region of the stratosphere located about 20-30 miles above the earth's surface. It shields the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiation.

Radiation: the process of sending out rays of heat, light or other energy that travel through the air.

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Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Mary Mcleod Bethune was born on July 10, 1875 in South Carolina. Both her parents, Sam and Patsy, were slaves. Mary was born after the Civil War so she was free.

Mary was one of seventeen children. Mary's parents, like many slaves, took the name of their masters as their own.

Mary could not read or write but she always wanted to. Then the Missionary Board of the Presbyterian Church opened a school for Negro children. Mary was allowed to go. For six years Mary attended the school. She was the only one in her family that attended the school. Her family and neighbors depended on her to help them with their businesses.

After Mary graduated she wanted to continue her education. Then the families mule died so

Mary had to stay home to help plow.

Mary Crissman, a dressmaker and Quaker from Denver, Colorado, offered a scholarship for one of the students at Mayesville Mission School. Marys teacher recommended Mary for the scholarship. The scholarship was to Scotia Seminary in Concord, North Carolina.

At Scotia, Mary learned about the Christian teachings on brotherhood. Mary spent seven years at Scotia. She graduated in 1895. Instead of her dream of being a missionary and going to Africa, she became a teacher. She wanted to share her knowledge with less fortunate Negroes.

Miss Crissman gave her another scholarship. This time to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. When Mary left Moody she decided to help the South where she was born and raised. First she went to Haines Institute in

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Augusta, Georgia. There she helped underprivileged children. Mary spent three years at Haines.

Next Mary went to Sumter, South Carolina. There she met Albertus Bethune. In January 1900 Mary and Albertus were married. Then they moved to Savannah, Georgia. There they had one son, Albert.

All her life Mary's dream was to establish a school of her own. On October 3, 1904 she opened a school in Daytona Florida. At the school there was a choir which was lead by Mary. John D. Rockefeller heard the choir on many occassions. He gave the school money and supplies. Mary's school prospered by the years.

In 1924 the school became Bethune-Cookman College. The school was coed. Mary was the president of the school. The school had 799 students and 40 faculty members. The campus was 32 acres of land and 19 buildings. Mary also wanted

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Negro adults to have an education so she started night (school) school for them.

Mary was good friends with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He asked her to live in Washington D.C. and work with the National Youth Administration. There she helped young blacks to find jobs.

Mary received many awards, trophies, and honors for her achievements in Negro education.

Mary Mcleod Bethune died at the age of 79 on May 18, 1955. In her last Will and Testament she wrote: "I leave you love; I leave you hope; I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another; I leave you a thirst for education; I leave you racial dignity; I leave you a desire to live in harmony with your fellow men; I leave you a responsibility to our young people." Mary was buried on her school grounds. On her gravestone it was marked "Mother!"

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Meltzer, Milton, Mary Mcleod Bethune: Voice of Black Hope. Canada: Viking Penguin Inc., 1987.

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Richardson, Ben and Fahey, William A., Great Black Americans. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976.

Stratton, Madeline, Negroes Who Helped Build America. Massachusetts. Ginn and Co., 1965.

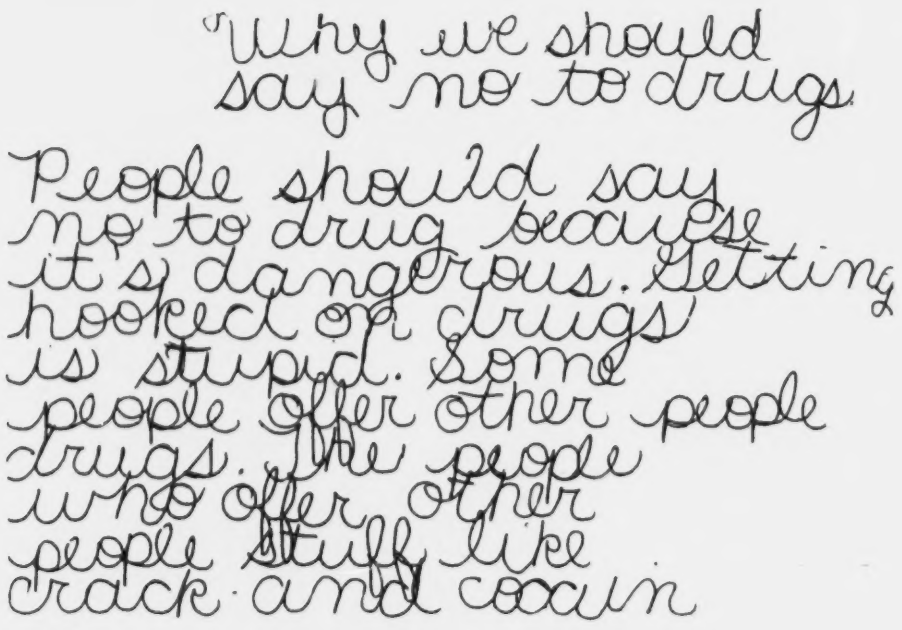
6: Developed Discussion No papers were considered to be Developed Discussions. For papers to be placed in this category, they had to contain all the elements of the previous category, plus present a coherent sense of purpose and audience. These papers would contained an overt use of organizational structure and demonstrate excellent command of the conventions of written English.

PART 3: Persuasive Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of persuasive writing submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated (see Chapter Two for the complete scoring guides). Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Opinion The paper below is an example of an Opinion. In this paper, the writer asserts an opinion, but does not develop or explain this opinion in any detail. In *Opinion* papers reasons sometimes are given to support the opinion, but these reasons are unrelated to the opinion or contradict one another.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)



must want
damange thier
brains because
they probably want
to kill them, and
familys come all
over the ~~would~~
world just to
a funeral because
a kid took drugs.
Please just say No!!.—

2: Extended Opinion The four papers below are examples of Extended Opinions. These papers include a statement of opinion and reasons to support the opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly presented or the explanations are confusing.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

In my opinion smoking is bad for you, because it causes problems like when people get covered with smoke thet smell like smoke. When people leave a room because of the smoke. Smoke polution is caused by smoking too. It harms your heath too. It causes your lungs to turn black. It puts holes in your air sacs. You get less oxygen. You get cancer. Here's just a few things that could happen if you smoke. So don't Smoke.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Just Say
No!

When they ask you to take drugs you have to <u>say no!</u> They ruin your brian and make you crazy. Don't you think it is good to <u>say no</u> beacaus you hare better things to do.

<u>So just Say No!</u>

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

November 16, 1989

Dear School Board,

I think the schools should keep the agriculture programs and also the home economics.

Agriculture helps the males and females. It teaches the kids to repair things, it helps teaching the kids about animals, it teaches the kids to weld, and also many other useful things.

Home economics is also useful to kids. The teacher teaches the kids to cook, to take a care of children, they also the teach the kids to sew, and many useful things.

Sincerely

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

Discipline

Discipline is important in everyday life. It can show us how to be responsible in every way. If we didn't have discipline we wouldn't know how to cope in life. Even though people dislike being disciplined in life, we still have to be, or else we will be brought up to be careless and irresponsible adults. If you get brought up that way, then maybe your own kids will be too, because you were not discipline when you were younger.

The more you are discipline the better of a person you'll be.

3: Partially Developed Argument The four papers below are examples of Partially Developed Arguments. These papers include an opinion statement and clear reasons to support the opinion. They also contain attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations given are not developed or elaborated. These papers may also contain an implicit reference to the opposing point of view.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Governor Waihee is thinking about letting working parents take time off from work to attend classes with their children.

I don't think it's a good idea for working parents to come to school because they have to go to work and have other things to do.

If other peoples parents come to school I wouldn't mind as much but still yet if I got in trouble and my best friends parents were here they might think I'm a bad influence and not let their kid come to my house or not let me go over to their's.

I wouldn't want my parents to come to my school because I can't rest or do something else or my mom or dad would scold me and embarrass me.

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

I ~~believe~~ that students should have to make up snow days. Some reasons for this is because of the laws, because students need that time for learning, and because all students should have to go the same amount of school a year.

First of all it is the law that we go 180 days of school a year. This law is just as important as any other law, such as traffic laws that we obey everyday. It was set for the students advantage, so they should use it just like all the advantages of a teenager.

Secondly, students need that time for learning. They need all 180 days worth of material that year. They could miss something that could be very important for the next year, because they did not get that far.

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Last, but not least, all students should have to go the same amount of days. Some students do not live in as area where it snows a lot, and they would get ahead of the students that live in snowy area's. This would make many students fall behind in schod that year.

Now you see why I strongly beleive that snow days should be made up.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

" Look mom, I know you dont want me to have a sling-shot, but think of all the wonderful things I could do with it! There are tons of reasons why I should be able to have one. Here are just some of the reasons.

For one thing, I would be able to keep the neighboors cats away from the birds in the bird house! I know you'd hate it if those cats got in there and actually ATE one!

Another reason is at Christmas time, I could go out and kill maybe a squirrel and make an ornament out of him! I know you spend alot of money on Christmas decorations every year.

And most importantly, I feel that you should let me have a slingshot because I am on top of everything. I' m doing well in school, been doing my homework, and for the past week, I've been baby-sitting my little brother!

I deserve a slingshot!"

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

Letters vs. Phone Calls

In my opinion, letters are better than phone calls for the following three reasons. First, letters are more personal. No one reads a letter except for the person it's written to. Second, letters are more thoughtful. Letters show that the person writing the letter cares enough about the person receiving the letter that they have taken the time to write. Finally, you can say more in a letter. On the phone, people may forget to say something, but in a letter, they have time to think. As you can see, the above three reasons show why letters are better than phones.

4: Developed Argument The four papers below are examples of Developed Arguments. In these papers, the writers state their opinions with reasons to support their opinions. They also include at least one explanation that is well developed. Rhetorical devices (such as sequence of events, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and classification) may be used to develop the explanation. These papers may also contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Just Say No to Drugs

Some kids think it cool to do drugs. They say its a great way to have fun. I think doing drugs are really dumb. I just say no to drugs.

Doing drugs can slow your brain wave down. This causes you body motions to slow down. Then you will begin to have more accidents.

Having a drug habit can cause you to break to a low. You may begin to steal, so you can buy drugs. You may commit violet crimes just to get drugs.

Doing drugs can cause you to lose your family and friends. Your friends may not want to be with someone who is high all the time. Your family may turn against you because you do drugs.

So, I just say no to drugs. It will be better for my family, friends and me. So, be cool and say no to drugs.

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Dear Editor,

I feel that the school lunches are very distasteful and to worsen the problem, some of the cafeteria workers are discourteous and impolite. With the addition of long lines, it just isn't worthwhile to eat at our school cafeteria.

Many of the meals they serve us are unappealing and are made with such a low grade of food that they are not healthy. Also, sometimes the food is either cold or too hot to eat.

Many of the cafeteria workers make eating even more unpleasant. Some of them tend to have an unfriendly attitude. Whenever they give instructions, they holler at you instead of kindly asking.

To improve the school lunches, I suggest that the school should buy a higher grade of food and try to fix the meals more to the student body's liking. Maybe the school can also serve a mixture of dishes so that each student can pick the food of their choice. I know that changes will cost money, but it is time to make changes and I'm sure most of the students would be willing to spend a little more to have a better lunch.

Sincerely,

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

The Most Impressive Movie Villin

In my opionion the "Joker", a character from the movie Batman, is one of the most impressive movie villians of the year. I think he is impressive because he is cruel, mean, and wizzy. The "Joker's" crueley is shown through the movie. He poisions people with deadly goopshoots them for the fun of it, and kidnapes people because he likes them. He tears up paintings, burns his girlfriend and shoots his assistant. After such acts of crueley he comes up with a witty commet as "Have you ever danced with the devil in the pail moon light" or "I'm a hawk and I want to clean my claws". He also does other wizzy things like promising to throw out two million dollars to the waiting crowd. Not only does he keeps his promise but he also poisions the people he throws the money to. This typpe of crueley and witiness makes the "Joker" one of the most impressive villions of all times.

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Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

After school job SA

I have a job after school. I work on Mondays from 6:30 to 9:30 and make four dollars an hour. It has defiantly had a positive affect on me. I think student should be allowed to hold after school jobs for three reasons:

First it helps to make one more independant. Students at our age often argue with their parents because we would like to be more independant of our parents in terms of where we go, when, and what we do. The problem there is that while we want more independance, we all know we aren't ready to have it. Having a job would help balance the scales more. We would have earned our own spending money and our parents would know that we are reliable and trustworthy. The result would be more freedom + privilages.

Second, a job would give you a better self image. You feel better about yourself. You can realize your proficiencies and those which your lacking

in. You see development the much needed sense of being trusted and needed.

On conclusion, student will benefit from having an after school job because of the various positive results of it.

6: Partially Developed Refutation In order to be classified as Partially Developed Refutations, papers had to include a clear opinion statement, with reasons to support the opinion, and elaborated explanations. These papers also should contain an adequate summary of the opposite point of view and may include some attempt to discuss this opposing position. No papers submitted fit into this category.

Developed Refutation For papers to be considered Developed Refutations, they had to contain opinion statements, reasons to support the opinion, explanations of these reasons, plus a discussion and/or refutation of the opposing point of view. The refutation must be clear and explicit, including a discussion of why the opposing viewpoint is limited or incorrect. No papers submitted fit into this category.

PART 4: Poems

The following examples illustrate the poems that were submitted. The first four examples were written by fourth graders; the last three by eighth graders.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Snake for Dinner

I am hungry.
I want to eat a snake.
I am hot and thirsty.
It is sandy and rocky.
There are dead animals.
I don't want to eat locusts.
I don't want to eat ants.
There goes a snake slithered bye.
There goes dinner bye! bye! bye!

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

"Where Does the Sky End?"

Where does the sky end?
Do we depend
On God our friend
To tell us
Where the sky ends?

Or should we rely
On a fly
Who doesn't even know
why
Theres even a sky

I think we should
try
To understand why
We are trying to fly

I hope I do depend
And do not ofend
Our God and our friend
While trying to find
Where the sky
ends.

Example #3 (Fourth Grade)

The Boogaboga's

The Boogaboogas are coming, they're
now in clear sight,
and if you're not careful, they'll
eat you (bight) ~~by~~ bite!
I'm serious you know, not kidding
at all, Oh no, now they're coming
right through the waterfall!
If you don't run for dear life, they'll
be all over you, like bees on a hive
(and that's no jive)!
Gotta run now, Au revoir
and good night!
Oh and one more thing, don't let
the bed bugs bite!

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Example #4 (Fourth Grade)

Pat's Bag

In my my pat's
purple wool bag,
I own with diamonds
and gold coins, I carry
Washington, Sammy
and Junior my
two dogs. Bingo our
bunny, My grandad
who is dead, and my
preschool teacher and
also I carry most
precious of all the
soul of a cats.

Example #5 (Eighth Grade)

"I am,"

I am a human that wants to be an animal.
I wonder about the language of animals.
I hear human minds at work.
I see myself flying like a bird.
I want to have the wet ground for my own.
I am a human that wants to be an animal.

I pretend that I am flying.
I feel my fur keeping me warm.
I touch the clouds. I fly so high
I worry about my fellow animals for their homes have been wrecked.
I cry for my homeless brothers.
I am a human that wants to be an animal.

I understand our ecological problems.
I say, "Let our brothers alone".
I dream of roaming with the buffalo or swimming with a whale.
I try to save the animals from waste and ecology damage.
I hope for life as something other than a human.
I am a human that wants to be an animal.

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Example #6 (Eighth Grade)

"The Dinosaur"

It's true, I missed the bus.
My mom's so mad, she's starting to cuss.
She picks me up in a lemon of a car,
I'm thinking about an entry on a dinosaur,
When all of a sudden, the car stops.
And the radio's still singing bebops.
Mom calls Dad from work.
After that, she tries the car again, and it starts with a jerk.
When Mom gets back,
To the house,
She'll hang her coat on the rack,
Talk to her spouse, when he gets
Home.
She'll stand up (as tall as a gnome),
And yell.....and yell..... yell.....
Then maybe the house fell.....

Example #7 (Eighth Grade)

Autumn, my friend,
a season of change,
of golden sky
and glorious maroon and orange and golden
leaves falling to the ground
of children laughing and playing
of brightly colored squashes and corns and
pumpkins
of jack-o-lanterns grinning from ear to ear
of ghosts and goblins in the dark of night
of the wind whistling and stirring the leaves
to dance
of ever-shortening days and ever-lengthening
nights
a season of death
of bare tree limbs and brown grass
yet, my friend,
you do not seem sad nor solemn
but laughing and dancing and playing
like a child
trying to make us feel happy and free
letting us know of the beauty and life
all around us
and the warm fire of love burning within
all our hearts

PART 5: Letters

The following examples illustrate the letters that were submitted, but could not be classified as informative or persuasive. The first five were written by fourth graders; the last two by eighth graders.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Dear President George Bush,

I wish you would put all the drug dealers in jail so we could have peace in this world, a better place to live.

Sincerely yours,

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Dear Humpty Dumpty,

We're sorry we couldn't put you back together again. We should have used bandaids, but we didn't have any. We also should have used glue, but nobody would let us. They thought putting an egg together was nonsense. We hope you are fine.

Your freinds,

All the Kings Men

P.S. Why don't you go to a repair shop

Example #3 (Fourth Grade)

Dear Mrs. Richardson,
Thank you for showing us the film. It was exciting. Your fish tank has colorful fish in it. I liked glancing around the library. It was fun. I liked it. I like to see different books.

Your friend,

Example #4 (Fourth Grade)

Jack's Discount Store
2950 West 27th Street
Brooklyn, New York 11224

Dear Sir:

I bought a bike from your store. On the day that I went to pick it up, mother was busy. She could not take it back to the store. My mother took the bike

Example #5 (Fourth Grade)

Dear Mr.

This is a good school year for me. Because I have studied very hard this year. I have learned lots of new thing this year.

I'm looking forword to summer vacation. I'm going to do a lot of neat things. I will swim and play.

Example #6 (Eighth Grade)

Dear John Duos,

Hey man! What's up? I'm having a great time here at Leesburg. I'm active in both of sports here. Since I've started junior high football I've been getting in shape and ready to play J.V football. I no that you really don't like the game of football that much, but you can get to be real good if you try hard enough. I never liked liked football until I came here and tried it out. If you would play football John, with enough practice + determination you could probably be the best highschool lineman in the state of Louisiana. You might even get a scholarship to play for a big college. How does that sound? Pretty good Uh! Well, if you' just think about it allright.

Your friend

Example #7 (Eighth Grade)

November 22, 1989

Dear Hai-Yen,

Hi! since it's a long I haven't write you any letter. now I am hoping that you are not mad at me. As you know, I don't write well like you write.

Yen, to tell you the truth I really like to stay in California. but I have no choice. I have to leave you and follow my parents to Florida. Yen, how is school going? Are you having fun right now? Are you still going to E.S.L. class?

since from the begining of this letter, I am just asking you things, but never tell you anything about my life.

Yen, I think the weather in Florida is okay. It's warm. I like the school too. I have a lot of friends here but I can't go out with them, as you know my parents always keep me in the house all the times. My life is very boring.

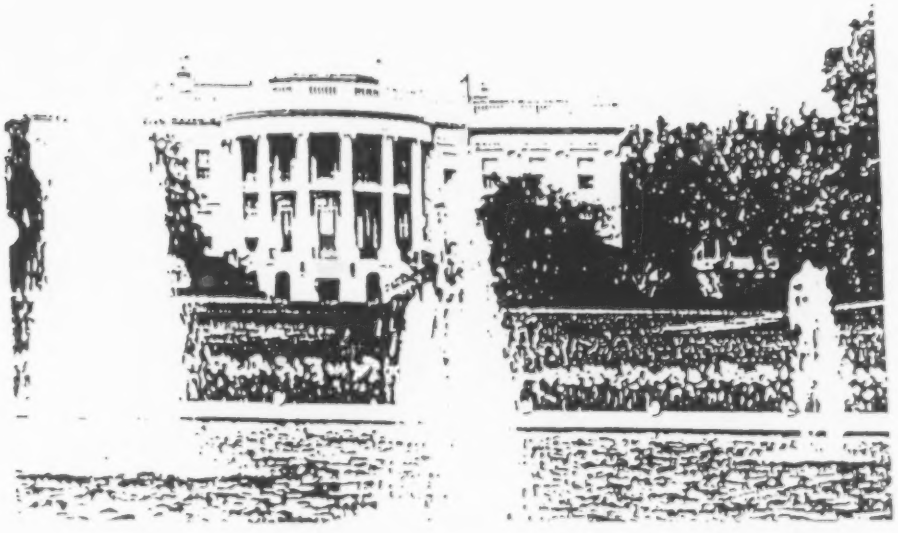
Yen, I don't know what to say but I never forget to wish you have a bright future is waiting for you. wishing youre doing good job in school. wish you have a very peaceful life. I'll say good-bye for now. next time I will write you longer.

Sincerely,

PART 6: Research Reports

The following research paper, "The History of the White House," is typical of the several research reports that were submitted. This paper was written by an eighth grader. Some of the other topics of research reports were: Abraham Lincoln, Watergate, and World War II in the Pacific.

The History of the White House



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November 2, 1800, President John Adams, moved into the White House. Ever since that day, each president has lived there during his term. It also houses a number of administation offices. Over the years, the White House has become a great symbol of the executive branch of the United States. It has also become one of the world-wide symbols of Democracy.

Chapter I

Construction of the White House

In 1791, United States Congress was looking for a permanent home for the federal government.[1] They decided to build a capital city along the Potomac River. They also needed a President's Mansion in the capital.

Congress offered $500.00 to any architect who could design the best President's Mansion. An Irish-born architect named James Hoban and eighteen other architects sent in their plans for the perfect President's Mansion.[2]

President George Washington looked over all the plans and decided that Hoban's would be the best, even though Congress requested that the porch and wings of the Hoban's plans be deleted.

In July of 1792, the commissioner invited James Hoban to the Federal City (soon to be called Washington, D.C.). When he arrived there, he saw that the "city" was nothing more than a swamp.

On October 12, 1792, the first cornerstone of the mansion was laid. It was the first government building to be started in the city. Hoban figured that they had eight more years to build the mansion. But Congress were running low on money, and materials were hard to get.

President John Adams and his wife Abigail were ready to move in, even though only six rooms were ready for occupancy; but they moved in anyway.

Chapter II

Living in the White House

Abigail Adams moved into the mansion on the night of November 16, 1800. President John Adams moved in two weeks earlier. When she got there, she soon learned about all the inconveniences of living in the unfinished mansion; however, she was pleased with the mansion despite the many problems

President Adams decided to lend dignity to the new white mansion. He called it the "President's Palace". On New Years Day, 1801, the President Adams held the first formal reception in Abigail's upstairs oval room.

The next President to serve his term and move into the White House was Thomas Jefferson. Since the mansion can only be occupied by the President in office, Ex-president Adams had to move out. Jefferson did not believe that the President should live in a palace; he merely called it the "President's House".

Since the "President's House" was not yet finished, he took great pride in finishing and furnishing many of the rooms in it. He added a porch and low colonnades. He added East and West Terraces to the growing mansion.

Also, he furnished the State oval room quite elegantly. He used it to meet important dignitaries. It is called the Blue Room. He chose not to finish the East Room. Instead, he used it as an extra pantry. President Jefferson did most of his formal

entertaining in the two parlors on either side of the Blue Room. These rooms were named after the colors most used in them. The room decorated in red is called the Red Room, and the room decorated in green is called the Green Room.

Before Jefferson moved into the capital city, it was a bog. But he made it fit for carriages and had poplar trees planted along the streets.

The next president and his wife to live in the White house were James and Dolly Madison. Dolly had many gay parties in the President's House. When Congress granted money for furniture, Dolly Bought mirrors to brighten up the mansion.

Chapter III

The Burning of the White House

In 1814, the United States was at war with England in the War of 1812. Part of this time, President Madison was away, leaving Dolly alone in the White House. It was then, that word had spread that the British were coming to Washington. Dolly carefully packed some important state papers and a large portrait of George Washington taken from the frame and hidden. Then Dolly disguised herself as a poor farmer's wife, entered a waiting stage coach, and fled to safety.

That night the British burned every government building to the ground, including the White House. The next day, the only structure left of the mansion were the four blackened outside walls. Mr. Hoban was again called back to rebuild the White House. The mansion was finally rebuilt and the walls were again white.

President Monroe was the new President It cost so much to rebuild and restore the house that Congress had barely any money for furniture. Monroe offered to sell his own furniture to raise more money. With this money, Congress bought elegant French furniture for the mansion, some of which is still being used in the White House today.

Chapter IV

Changes in the White House

President Monroe liked to live very formally. After the fire, he redid the White House to suit his taste. He also preferred to call the mansion the "Executive Mansion". Even though he called it the Executive Mansion, everyone else called it just the White House.

Jackson was the next president. He made many important changes in the White House. He had water piped into the mansion, making it no longer necessary to carry it in by hand. He added the North Porch, or portico. This gave the White House the address 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. "This entrance shall be used only by kings, queens and very important people," Jackson announced.[3] This custom is still observed today.

Jackson also finished the East Room. It became the formal reception room, but it was also used as a play room for the children of the White House. Gradually, the 18 acres of the White House were drained, and gardens were planted there. Gas lights were installed in the mansion in the 1840's.

In 1850 President Fillmore made headlines when he had the first bathtub in the White House installed. People were concerned because they considered tub bathing dangerous. He also bought a cookstove for the kitchen, but the cook refused to use it because she felt comfortable with the big fireplace used up

to this time. So President Fillmore himself learned how to use the stove and then taught the cook.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Fillmore, being a teacher, realized that there were no books in the mansion- not even a dictionary! With the money Congress granted for books, Mrs. Fillmore selected the first books for the White House Library.

When Chester Arthur became President, he refused to move in until everything was refurnished and redecorated. He had twenty-four wagon-loads of furniture sold at an auction. Today, the government has a law prohibiting such a procedure. All furniture not wanted must by law be sent to the Smithsonian Institution.

As the country grew and changed so did the mansion. Telephones were installed. Electricity took the place of gas.

When Theodore Roosevelt became President, the house was becoming too small for a large family and a growing staff. Also the president was informed by engineers that the foundations were weak. Congress agreed that after one hundred years, the house needed extensive renovation.

The Roosevelts had to temporarily move out of the mansion, so that the engineers, painters, and carpenters could do their jobs. They put steel beams in the basement to support the mansion and elongated the dining room to seat one hundred people. A wing was added for president offices, and the second floor was made into a private home for the President and his family. They also added a wing for the offices of the president.

"Let's change the name officially to the White House,"

Roosevelt said to Congress. "That's what everyone calls it anyway."[4] In 1902, Congress passed a law making the "White House" the official title of the mansion.

With the White House fully renovated, it eventually still seemed too small; President Coolidge added a third floor, which provided extra bedrooms and needed storage space. In the 1930's President Roosevelt added a swimming pool.

Along with the rest of the country, during World War II, precautions were taken to protect the White House. Black-out curtains were installed, underground offices and bomb shelters were built, and machine guns were mounted on the roof.

During President Harry Truman's term in office in 1948, he was alerted to the alarming possibilty that the building might collapse at any moment. It seems that over the many years of changes in pipes and electrical wiring, and the wear and tear caused by the thousands of sight-seers who toured through the White House, the building was under too great a strain.

At first, serious thought was given to tearing down the place and building a modern new White House, but the American people wanted their original mansion preserved. It was finally decided to dismantle each room carefully and to rebuild just as close as possible to its original design. It was a tremendous job. The architects used the basic plans made by James Hoban. They added a strong foundation that could withstand the heavy traffic. Congress gladly granted the nearly 6 million dollars, which was a very large sum during that period of time.

During President John F. Kennedy's presidency, Mrs. Kennedy restored and added many beautiful furnishings and valuable art work to make the White House a showcase of the country.

Chapter V

The White House Today

Today the White House has become the most famous house in the world. Millions tour it each year.

The White House itself is surrounded by 18 acres of beautiful garden scenery. It has trees, flowers, and a great lawn called the President's Park.[5] There are now 132 rooms in the White House. There are 323 permanent staff working in the White House.[6]

The East Wing of the White House serves as a public entrance, and houses many offices for the President's staff. The public rooms of the White House are used for weddings, parties, and other social events. Examples of these rooms are the Red Room, Green Room, Blue Room, and the East Room. The East Room is used to display caskets of the Presidents who have died during their term like Lincoln, Kennedy, etc.[7]

The Executive Wing of the house is where the offices of the President and other government officials are located. The Oval Office, which is the President's office, was added in 1934 by President Roosevelt. The top two floors of the White House are the official living quarters of the President and his family.

In the West Terrace of the White House is the family's private movie theater. The indoor swimming pool is located in the East Terrace. Above that area are the White House press facilities, where presidential speeches are televised via satellite all over the world.[8]

Chapter VI

Ghosts in the White House?

Some people claim they have seen a ghost in the White House! Well-known people like Winston Churchill and Princess Julianna of the Netherlands claim that they had seen Lincoln's ghost in his bedroom at the White House.[9]

Also members of the Reagan family claim that they had seen him. When Maureen Reagan and her husband, slept in the Lincoln's Bedroom, they said they have experienced the presence of Lincoln's spirit. President Reagan and Nancy Reagan refused to be spooked by Lincoln's ghost, but "there is one other member of the First Family who believes. Nancy Reagan says Rex, the family dog, often barks at the Lincoln Bedroom door, but refuses to go in."[10]

As our country has grown and matured, so has the White House reflected all these changes and improvements. This mansion is not just the living and working quarters of our Presidents, but also an important symbol of our American heritage. Each President has left his mark, good or bad, during his term of office. The people of our country over the years have developed a deep love and pride for our great growing and changing White House.

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A

Appendix

Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of the School-Based Writing Study Participants

This report contains results for groups of students within the nation defined by certain demographic characteristics. The definitions for subgroups, used in all NAEP assessments, as defined by gender, race/ethnicity, parents' education level, geographic region, and type of community follows.

Gender. Results are reported separately for males and females. Gender was reported by the student.

Race/Ethnicity. Results are presented for students of different racial/ethnic groups according to the following mutually exclusive categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian (including Alaskan Native). Some racial/ethnic results are not reported separately because there were too few students in the classification. However, the data for all students, regardless of whether their racial/ethnic group was reported separately, were included in computing the overall results.

Parents' Education Level. Students were asked to indicate the extent of schooling for each of their parents — did not finish high school, graduated from high school, had some education after high school, or graduated from college. The response indicating the higher level of education for either parent was selected for reporting.

Geographic Region. The United States has been divided into four regions: Northeast, Southeast, Central, and West.

Type of Community. Results are provided for three mutually exclusive community types — advantaged urban, disadvantaged urban, and extreme rural — areas that typically reveal differences in students' performance. The definitions of these areas follows.

Advantaged Urban: Students in this group reside in metropolitan statistical areas and attend schools where a high proportion of the students' parents are in professional or managerial positions.

Disadvantaged Urban: Students in this group reside in metropolitan statistical areas and attend schools where a high proportion of the students' parents are on welfare or are not regularly employed.

Extreme Rural: Students in this group do not reside in metropolitan statistical areas. They attend schools in areas with a population below 10,000 where many of the students' parents are farmers or farm workers.

Table A.1*

Table A.1 presents the percentages of students who participated in this school-based writing study in each of the major demographic categories.

		Grade 4 %	Grade 8 %
Gender	**Male**	52	51
	Female	48	49
Race/Ethnicity	**White**	68	71
	Black	17	15
	Hispanic	10	10
	Other	5	4
Parents' Level of Education	**Less than H.S.**	6	8
	H.S. Grad.	18	34
	Some Ed. after H.S.	4	12
	College Grad	39	36
	Unknown	33	9
Geographic Regions	**Northeast**	28	24
	Southeast	27	22
	Central	20	23
	West	25	31
Type of Community	**Advantaged Urban**	12	13
	Disadvantaged Urban	10	8
	Extreme Rural	11	7

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Appendix B: Students' Performance on School-Based Writing and Their Use of Process Strategies and Resources for Writing

The table in this appendix presents the percentages of students at each score level whose papers contained evidence of having employed process strategies and resources for writing. Process strategies include major revisions (changes beyond the sentence level), minor revisions (changes at the word or sentence level), and other strategies, such as conferencing with peers or teachers. Resources for writing include using one's own ideas, referring to something one has read, or referring to something one has studied.

Use of Process Strategies

		% Score 1	% Score 2	% Score 3	% Score 4	% Score 5	% Score 6
Grade 4	Major Revisions	1	0	2	0	10**	0**
	Minor Revisions	27	23	22	19	7**	0**
	Other Strategies	32	37	43	57	61**	100**
Grade 8	Major Revisions	0	0	2	1	7	10**
	Minor Revisions	27	30	29	30	48	52**
	Other Strategies	34	32	51	53	55	50**

Use of Resources for Writing

		% Score 1	% Score 2	% Score 3	% Score 4	% Score 5	% Score 6
Grade 4	Own Ideas	80	81	81	62	44**	0**
	Read	10	11	12	16	41**	100**
	Studied	10	9	8	14	25**	100**
Grade 8	Own Ideas	94	91	89	95	95	80**
	Read	5	7	13	14	18	41**
	Studied	3	4	6	4	7	0**

**Due to small sample size, interpret with caution.

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